

THE
SWISS
FAMILY
ROBINSON







Edgar Parsons

A Prize

For general Subjects

Nov 1908.

SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON.



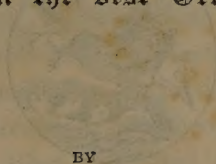
"In the porch of Rock House."

THE
SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON

AN ACCOUNT OF THE
ADVENTURES OF A SWISS PASTOR AND HIS FAMILY
ON AN UNINHABITED ISLAND

PREFACE.

Translated from the best Original Editions



BY

HENRY FRITH

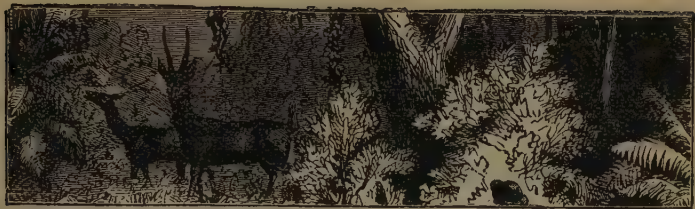
WITH ABOUT TWO HUNDRED ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON
WARD, LOCK & CO., LIMITED

THE
SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON



WARD, LOCK & CO., LIMITED
LONDON



PREFACE.



AMONG the works which may safely be called Children's Classics—works that have stood the test of time, and received the favourable verdict of successive generations of juvenile and other critics—the “Swiss Family Robinson” has won for itself a high and honourable position. First published many years ago, it has made its way into different countries, it has been translated into various languages ; and in process of time it has undergone considerable changes from the form in which it was originally written. New incidents were introduced and old errors corrected by successive editions, the scope and value of the work being considerably enlarged. On the other hand, editions were put forth purporting to be the story of THE “SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON,” in which the adventures of the emigrant islanders had been woefully shorn of their fair proportions, and much of the original matter had been omitted, to the great detriment of the book alike as regarded instruction and amusement.

In the present volume the publishers have put forth an en-

tirely new and original edition of the "Swiss Family Robinson." It will be found to contain all the valuable features of the best successive editions. The translator has consulted every good version of this admirable book in the construction of the present volume, which the Publishers hope will become the Standard English Edition, as at once the most complete and the most correct issue of the "Swiss Family Robinson."

It is with this view also that the system adopted by various translators has been studiously avoided. Young readers have a distaste for books in which a great mass of information is concentrated in a small space. They greatly prefer a genuine reproduction of the details of daily life, and thus the story of the Swiss Family Robinson will please them with its fully narrated incidents and adventures.

The illustrations in the text, about two hundred in number, have been prepared for this volume with great care, and the Publishers can confidently leave this new edition to the judgment of the Public, and to the appreciation of the mass of young English Readers all over the World.



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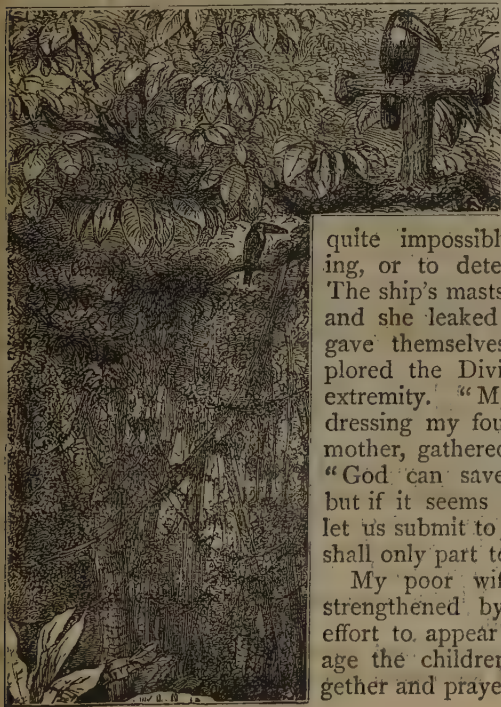




THE SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON.

CHAPTER I.

The Shipwreck.—The Swiss Family.—The Deserted Ship.—A Night on the Wreck.
—Making a Raft.—The Raft is Launched.—A Second Night on the Wreck.



HE storm had lasted for six days,—and even then, far from subsiding, it seemed to gather greater fury. We were carried out of our course towards the south-east, and it had become

quite impossible to take any reckoning, or to determine our whereabouts. The ship's masts had gone by the board, and she leaked terribly. All on board gave themselves up for lost, and implored the Divine compassion in their extremity. "My children," I said, addressing my four sons, who, with their mother, gathered round me trembling, "God can save us if He so wills it; but if it seems good to Him otherwise, let us submit to His dispensations. We shall only part to meet in a better world."

My poor wife dried her tears, and strengthened by my example made an effort to appear calm, so as to encourage the children. We knelt down together and prayed fervently.

Suddenly I was delighted to hear above the terrible din of the storm the welcome cry of "*Land, Land.*" At the same moment the ship experienced a tremendous shock, followed by a long and terrible rending noise of the timbers. The waves beat on us, and then, judging by the cessation of all motion, I perceived that the ship had wedged itself firmly between the rocks.

"All is lost; lower away the boats!" cried a voice, which I recognised as the captain's. This came upon us like a thunderbolt. "Lost!" exclaimed the children as they threw themselves into my arms. I felt the necessity of reassuring them if possible; so I exclaimed,—

"Be calm, my boys, be calm; do not despair. God will give us courage to resist. I will go on deck and see whether there are not some means of escape open to us."

I left the cabin and went on deck. Battered and blinded, and at times knocked down by the tremendous seas, I was obliged to gain some position where I was comparatively out of reach before I could look round. When I was able to take in the surroundings, I perceived that all the boats had been already launched, and that the crew had quitted the ship. A sailor was just at that moment in the act of cutting loose the last boat. They had forgotten us!

I called out, I screamed to them, but my voice was drowned in the roar of the tempest, and I saw with horror that we had been abandoned with the wreck.

I was in some measure consoled in this dreadful extremity, by remarking that the ship had been so wedged in that the poop was high above water, and so our cabin was accordingly out of reach of the waves. At the same time I could see, notwithstanding the thickness of the weather, a low-lying coast away to the southward, which, desolate as it seemed, at once became the object of my warmest desires.

I made my way back to my family, and affecting a tranquillity I was far from feeling, I said,—

"Take courage; all is not yet lost. Part of the ship is still well above water. To-morrow the sea will probably have gone down a little, and we shall be able to get ashore."

This prediction put the boys into good spirits, and with all the confidence of their age they accepted the problematical for a certainty.

I noticed that my wife quite appreciated the conditions under which we held our lives; but at the same time I could see that her trust in Providence had in no way diminished. "We shall have a terrible night to spend here," she said. "Let us take some food; nourishment to the body will strengthen the soul."

Night fell. The storm still beat upon the vessel with unabated fury. At every moment I was fearful that she would go to pieces.

My wife had made preparations for a simple repast. The boys partook of it with good appetites, while I consulted with her as to our mode of proceeding. The younger ones soon retired to their berths, but Fritz, the eldest, who alone comprehended the gravity of our situation, sat up with us.



"Father," he said, "I have been thinking how we can save ourselves and reach the land. If we could only devise some means for supporting my mother and my brothers in the water, you and I could swim ashore without assistance."

"Your idea is a good one," I said; "and let us endeavour to put it in practice as soon as we can."

We then got together some empty barrels, and some of those tin-plated water-kegs, sufficiently large to keep a person afloat. These we would fasten in pairs, with handkerchiefs, under the arms of each of my children and of my brave wife. This done, we secured upon our persons some knives, cord, flint and steel, and some other things which would be necessary when we reached land, if we should have the good fortune to do so when the ship went to pieces.

These precautions taken, Fritz was reassured, and being very tired, went to bed, and was soon in a sound sleep. My wife and I continued to keep watch throughout the night.

We passed the hours in prayer and in concerting measures for our safety. We were thankful when morning dawned, and I was able to notice that the storm was subsiding. At the first break of day I went up on deck. The wind had lulled considerably, and the sea was going down. The sun was rising with a ruddy glow, and the horizon was clearing rapidly.

Reanimated by the sight, I called my wife and children to come on deck. The boys were astonished to find that we were alone in the ship.

"Where are the sailors?" they exclaimed. "Why, when they went away, did not they take us with them? What is to become of us? How can we be saved?"

"My boys," I said, "our companions lost their reason in their precipitancy. They embarked without thinking of us, and have fallen victims to their haste. A greater Power has protected us. At this moment they may be more to be pitied than we. See, the sky is clear; land is not far off; perhaps our very abandonment may prove a blessing. Let us trust in God, who will not forsake us, and take counsel how to assure our common safety."

Fritz, still enterprising and adventurous, persisted in his idea of swimming out to reach the land; but Ernest, the second son, about twelve years old, an intelligent but a timorous and indolent youth, was frightened to cross the sea in such a manner, and proposed the construction of a raft. "It is very well for you who can swim," he said; "but what are we to do?"

I remarked that such a raft, besides taking a long time to construct, would be very difficult to steer, even if we had all the materials handy. These two considerations obliged us to abandon the suggestion.

"However," I said, "let us explore the ship; and while we reflect upon the best means of gaining the shore, let us afterwards reassemble on deck with anything likely to be useful to us on land."

Each one then departed in a different direction on a tour of discovery. I myself went at first to the store-room, to assure myself of

the means of existence. Fritz visited the magazines of arms and ammunition, from which he extracted guns, pistols, powder and shot. Ernest explored the carpenter's shop, and came out laden with tools and nails. Little Frank, the youngest of all, six years old, who also wanted to do something, showed us a box of fish-hooks and lines. Fritz and Ernest teased him about it; but I would not allow them to underrate him, for we might be reduced to live on the products of our



fishing. As for Jack, my third son, a bright boy of ten years old, he entered the captain's cabin, but scarcely had he opened the door, when two large dogs sprang out, which, rendered perfectly tame through hunger, allowed themselves to be led forth by the ears.

My wife told me that she had discovered a cow, an ass, two goats, six sheep, a ram, and a sow with young, to all of which she had given food and drink, but only just in time to save their lives, for the poor brutes had not eaten anything for two days.

"Everything you have brought," I cried, "is excellent, with the exception of Jack's companions, which will cost more than they are worth."

"I thought, father," said he, "that they will help us to hunt something when we get on shore."

"So far you are right," my dear boy; "but we are not yet on land. Have you thought how we are to get thither?"

"Well," said he, "can we not take the big tubs, and get ashore that way. I have often sailed in tubs in grandpapa's pond."

"Happy thought," I cried. "There is wisdom in children's mouths sometimes. Quick, let us have the saw, hammer, and nails, and see what can be done."

So we all descended to the hold in which many empty casks were floating about. We managed to raise four of them to the lower deck, which was just above the level of the water. The casks were well made, and hooped with iron, and were very suitable for our purpose. With the assistance of Fritz I sawed each of them in two.

When we had by these means obtained eight tubs, I looked out for a flexible plank which was sufficiently long to sustain them in such a way that the two extremities protruded beyond them, and formed a species of keel. We nailed two other planks along the sides of the tubs, so the result was a rough sort of boat divided into eight compartments. All was firmly fixed, and the boat appeared to me to be ready to launch, and fit to navigate in a calm sea for some little distance.

But unfortunately, when our boat was finished, it was so heavy that our united efforts could not launch it.

I sent for a screw jack, and Fritz, who had noticed one, ran to fetch it. I then put some wooden rollers underneath, and with the aid of the screw jack we managed to get it in motion.

Then I attached to the extremity of our boat a cord, one end of which I fastened to the ship, and, placing the rollers underneath, we had the satisfaction of seeing the boat rush into the sea. But such was the rapidity of its descent, that, if I had not taken the precaution to fasten it with a rope, it would have gone out of our reach. Unfortunately the boat did not float quite upright, but, by putting some heavy articles into the tubs as ballast, the boat regained its equilibrium. The boys uttered cries of joy at the sight, and, oblivious of danger, disputed who should be the first to embark. However, I could see that we should not be able to put to sea in safety, as the least movement was liable to overturn it. To obviate this, I thought of the outriggers which savage tribes use for a similar purpose, and resolved to adapt them to our ship.

So I took two spars, which I fixed at the stem and stern of my boat.

To each end of these I attached a small empty cask to sustain the outriggers. The boat now floated upright and steadily. It only now remained to take counsel as to the means of getting clear of the wreck ; so I got into one of the tubs and directed the boat towards an opening in the wreckage, then, by means of a hatchet and saw I cut my way out, and that done, we set about making some oars for our trip the next day.

It was so late when our work was finished, and as it was impossible to reach land that day, we were obliged to remain another night on the wreck, which threatened every instant to go to pieces, but we made a hearty meal, of which we stood in great need, for we scarcely had paused during the day to take a mouthful of food.

Somewhat reassured as to the morrow, I did not go to bed till I provided the boys with their swimming jackets in case of necessity. I then advised my wife to adopt a sailor's dress, which, under the circumstances, would be less embarrassing for her than her own. After some hesitation she withdrew, and returned shortly dressed in the clothes of one of the young sailors. She felt a little awkward in it at first, but I complimented her on her appearance, and cheered her with hope for the morrow, and she retired to her hammock and slept tranquilly.

The night passed without any incident.





CHAPTER II.

Loading the Raft.—Getting Ashore.—Our Thanksgiving.—The Tent.—Jack and the Lobster.—Our Dinner without Plates.—The Agouti.—Oysters.—Fritz is Rebuked.—Night on the Island.



T daybreak we were all awake: hope, like grief, is wakeful. After our morning prayer together, I said to my children, "We are now going, with Heaven's assistance, to attempt to reach a place of safety. Let us first feed the poor animals and leave them sufficient food for several days. Perhaps we shall be able to rescue them later, if we succeed in gaining the land. If you are all ready, collect everything that we can take with us that is likely to be useful on our arrival."

My first care was to embark some guns, a barrel of powder, and other ammunition, three pairs of pistols, and a bullet mould with some lead. Each of us was furnished with a game bag well stocked with provisions. I took some portable soup, biscuits, an iron pot, some knives, hatchets, saws, fishing lines, etc., and sufficient canvas to make a tent. We collected so many things that we were obliged to leave some behind us, although I exchanged many for the ballast which I had at first placed in the tubs.

Invoking the protection of Heaven, we embarked, and as we set out the cries of the poultry bade us a sad farewell. I thought it would be good to take the poultry with us, with some ducks and pigeons; "for," said I, "if we cannot feed them, they can feed us." So ten hens and two cocks were placed in a tub and covered with a wooden grating. As for the geese, ducks, and pigeons, I let them loose, trusting to their instinct to gain the land by flying or swimming. The boys were already embarked in the order which I had assigned them, when my wife reappeared from the vessel carrying a heavy sack, which she threw into the tub occupied by little Frank. I paid no particular attention to this at the time,

believing it only to be placed therein to serve as a more convenient seat for the child.

As soon as we were all settled, I cut the rope which held the boat, and we commenced to row towards the land. The tide was already half-flood when we quitted the vessel, and I had counted upon it to assist our little rowers. The children gazed with longing eyes on the land ahead, and we strained every nerve to reach it, but for a long time in vain.



The boat turned round and round without any progress, until I found the right manner to steer. In the first tub was my wife, in the second was little Frank; Fritz occupied the third. The two centre ones contained the powder, the arms, the canvas, the tools, food, and live stock. Jack occupied the sixth, Ernest the seventh, and I came last, and, rudder in hand, attempted to steer. Each of us had our swimming belt of empty bottles and barrels in case of accidents. The dogs were too big for us to take on board; but no sooner did they see us start than

they began to whine, and then leaped into the sea and swam after us. Turk was an English dog, and Bill of a Danish breed. I was afraid that they would not be able to swim so far; but from time to time they rested their paws on the outriggers or on the barrels, and so they kept up with us without much exertion.

The sea was getting rapidly calmer, the sky was cloudless, and the sun bright. We moved steadily along assisted by the flowing tide. Around us floated all the debris of the wreck. Fritz and I frequently seized upon a barrel and towed it after us. My wife kept watch upon her youngest child, and with clasped hands prayed silently.

Our passage was successfully accomplished, though it was of somewhat long duration. As we approached the shore it lost something of its former sterile appearance. Fritz, whose eyes were very quick, distinguished the various trees, and palms amongst the rest. Ernest, who was a bit of a gourmand, was delighted at the idea of some cocoa-nuts, and said they were larger and better than those he had seen in Europe.

"How delicious this all is!" exclaimed little Frank.

My wife trembled at this simple observation, and comprehending her feelings, I whispered as I pressed her hand, that perhaps the child was right after all. All human happiness is relative.

A discussion had meantime arisen between the other boys as to the species of trees on the island, and I regretted I had not thought of bringing the captain's telescope; but Jack took a small one from his pocket and handed it to me. I was thus enabled to observe the land, and endeavoured to find a place to get ashore at. The coast, which had at first appeared very inhospitable, now seemed more inviting towards the left. A strong current impelled us nearer the rocks, at that side where we made out a small bay towards which the geese and ducks were already making their way and served us as pioneers. Into this bay I steered our boat, and I reached a place where the bank was low and where there was just sufficient water to float us.

All who were able at once leaped ashore. Frank was helped out.

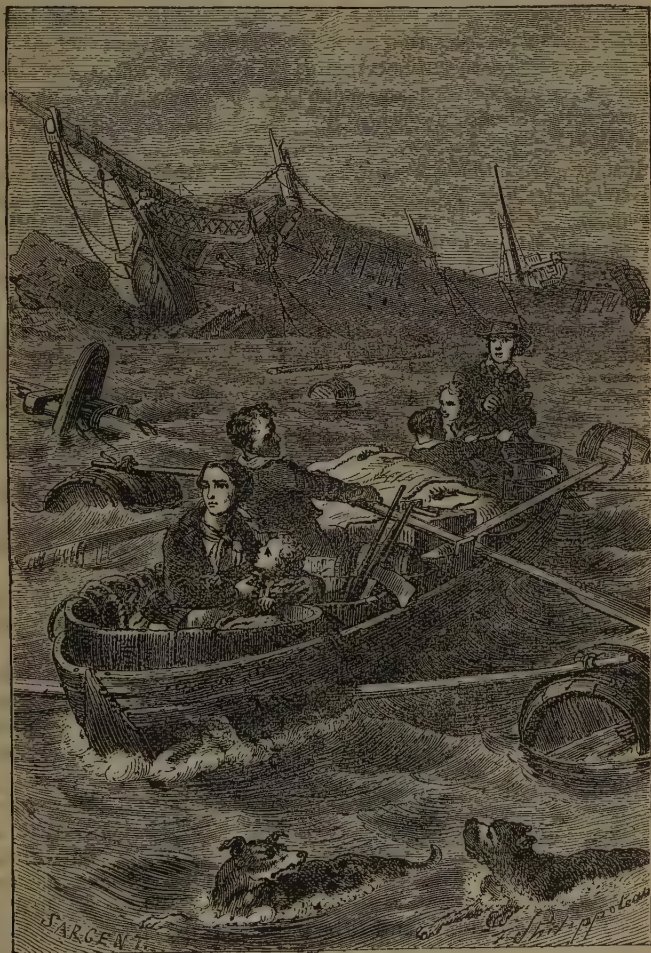
"And the cocoa-nuts, papa?" exclaimed little Frank.

"Yes," I replied smiling; "Fritz has good eyes, he was not mistaken. I can see some trees yonder. You shall have your cocoa-nuts by-and-by, my boy."

"I am so glad!" he cried, clapping his hands. My wife embraced him, and a tear dropped upon his face, but she looked up smilingly in a moment; Frank's happiness was contagious.

The dogs, which had landed before us, jumped around us, barking joyously. Even the ducks, geese, and pigeons, seemed glad to see us, and welcomed us in their way, while the penguins responded from the neighbouring rocks, and many flamingoes flew round us in affright.

But these discordant sounds were by no means unwelcome, as they assured us of a sufficiency of food.



Our first impulse was to kneel down on the shore and return thanks to Almighty God for His care of us, and to pray for His continued pro-

tection. I folded my wife and children in my arms. Her tearful gaze met mine.

"God is good," she said, with an angelic smile. "He has left us together, and with our children."

It was now necessary to proceed with the unlading of the boat, and we thought ourselves very rich already. The fowls were set at liberty, for we saw no reason to confine them. We sought first a suitable spot on which to set up our tent and a shelter for the night. The tent was soon erected by the aid of one of the outriggers. On the top of this I fastened the other pole, and inserted the end in a cleft of the rock. Over this we stretched the canvas, and the ends were fixed to the ground by pegs. For greater security we also placed all the heaviest articles upon the edges. Fritz fastened hooks to the sides, so that we could close the aperture at pleasure during the night.

I then directed the children to collect as much dry grass and moss as they could find, to serve as beds for us all. And while they set about the collection, I constructed a hearth at some distance from the tent, with some great stones, and with some dry driftwood I very quickly got a blazing fire.

My wife placed a pot of water upon the hearth. Into this water, when hot, I dropped five or six cakes of portable soup, and my wife, assisted by little Frank, set about cooking our dinner.

"What are you going to do with that, papa?" asked little Frank, who took the tablets of soup for strong glue.

His mother replied, smiling at this *naïve* question, that I was preparing soup for dinner.

"But where shall we find the meat?" said he; "for there is no butcher here from whom we can buy it; and we cannot make soup of glue," he added with a grimace.

"Oh, no!" said his mother; "what you take for glue are cakes of portable soup, or rather a well-cooked jelly, which is prepared from the best meat, to be used on board ship, because it would be otherwise impossible to store sufficient meat for a voyage—it would so soon get tainted."

Meanwhile Fritz, who had loaded the guns, took one and wended his way along the river. Ernest remarked that hunting was not so agreeable on a desert island, and directed his steps to the right along the beach, while Jack turned off to the left amongst the rocks in search of mussels. As for me, I went to seek the two casks which we had taken in tow as we came ashore, and I saw that if the place at which we landed was suitable for the boat, it would not do for any heavily laden raft. While I was thinking of some means of remedying this, I heard Jack uttering cries of terror at some distance. Seizing a hatchet, I

rushed to his assistance. I found him standing in a pool up to his knees, and an enormous lobster holding him tightly by the leg, he in vain endeavouring to release himself from his foe's grasp.

"Papa, papa!" he cried, in tones in which triumph and terror were mingled, "come quickly; I have caught such an immense thing."



"Well, then, bring it here."

"I can't; it has caught me."

I couldn't help laughing to see the captor taken captive in this manner, but I was obliged to go to his assistance at once. As I waded into the water the animal let go, and did his best to escape; but follow-

ing his course by the agitation of the water, I disabled him with a blow from the hatchet, and then seizing him by the body drew him ashore amid the triumphant rejoicings of Jack.

Jack was very anxious to carry this to his mother, and seized the lobster with both hands ; but scarcely had he stooped to grasp it, when he received such a violent blow from the lobster's tail, that he measured his length upon the sand and began to cry anew. But hearing our laughter, the little man took up a stone and killed his opponent; he then lifted his prisoner and carried him in triumph to his mother.

"Mother, Frank, Ernest, Fritz, I have caught a great lobster. Where



is Fritz? Take care, Frank, he will bite you." They all came round to inspect our prize, and were astonished at its immense size.

"Look what a monster he is," said Jack. "He held me by the leg with his terrible claws, and I believe I should have been cut in half if it had not been for my thick sailor's trousers. But I have settled his business for him."

"You little boaster!" I said; "you would have been the prey of the lobster if I had not come to your assistance. Your glory does not rest on a very solid basis."

Ernest having gravely examined the animal, suggested that it should

be put into the soup ; but my wife did not approve of the idea, and preferred to cook the lobster separately. Meantime I went to search for the hogsheads, and was successful at last in getting them out of the water. I congratulated Jack on my return on having made the first discovery, and promised him the claws of the lobster for his reward.

Ernest then informed us that he had also made a discovery of something to eat, but he could not reach them without wetting his feet.

"There is nothing much in that," said Jack. "I have seen them too, they are mussels. We don't care to eat those things. Look at my lobster."



"Oh," said Ernest again, "who knows ; there may be oysters too. They are not very deep down."

"Well, my little philosopher," I said, "if you think there are oysters, go and get some for our dinner. And why have you not brought them ? In our unfortunate position, each one must be as useful as possible, and must not fear to wet his feet. You see that the sun has already dried Jack's clothes and mine."

"I have also found out a quantity of salt in the crevices of the rocks," said Ernest. "I suppose that the sea water has deposited it there."

"Yes, without doubt, you eternal reasoner ; but you would have done much better to have brought some here in a bag than to have been talk-

ing about it so long. So if you do not wish to eat your soup quite tasteless, you had better go and fetch some at once."

Ernest actually did bring back some salt, but so mingled with earth and sand as to be useless, and I scolded him accordingly; but his mother proposed to cleanse the salt in a cup of spring water, and strain it through a piece of muslin. It was then put in the soup.

"Why cannot we use sea water?" asked Jack.

"Because it would be too bitter," replied Ernest.

I confirmed his assertion, and added that the sea water contained a bituminous matter extremely disagreeable to the taste, which was only lost by crystallizing the salt.

Meanwhile, my wife had prepared the soup, and announced it was ready, "but," she said, "we must wait for Fritz; and besides, I do not see how we are to eat it, we cannot lift a pot of boiling soup to our mouths, nor can we fish it up with biscuit." We were like the fox in the fable which the stork asked to feed from the long-necked bottle. Our embarrassment was so great that we could not help laughing heartily.

"If we only had some cocoa-nuts we could cut them in half and make spoons of them," said Ernest.

"No doubt," I replied; "but why not wish for silver at once? Fritz says cocoa-nuts have yet to be discovered, so you must think of something more easily obtainable."

"I have it," said Ernest; "why not use oyster shells?"

"That is a good idea," I said; "let us go and look for them."

Ernest moved off in search of the oysters, but it did not occur to any of us that our spoons would have very short handles, and that we should have to dip our fingers in the soup. Jack ran to the place indicated, and was up to his knees in water before Ernest overtook him. Jack detached the oysters and threw them up to his brother, who was afraid of wetting his feet. At the same time Ernest detached a large mussel and put it in his pocket. They both returned laden with oysters.

Just then Fritz made his appearance, with his hands behind his back, and his head bowed as if disappointed.

"Have you found nothing?" I asked.

"Nothing at all," he replied.

But his brothers, running behind him, perceived that he had captured a sucking-pig.

"Where did you find it?—where did you find it? Let us see it," they cried.

Fritz produced his prize with a very satisfied air.

"You have done very well," I said; "but you have told a falsehood. That is a thing you should never do, even in joke; and to tell stories in joke is very apt to lead to a habit of telling falsehoods seriously."

Fritz was very sorry, and then he told us that he had been on the other side of the river. There were a number of chests, planks, and other debris of the wreck in that direction.

"Shall we not go and look for them?" said he. "It is so different there from what it is here. And shall we not go and release the animals on board ship, or at least the cow? The biscuits will taste so much better for her milk, and there is capital pasture on the other side of the river. Why should we remain on this arid spot?"

"Patience, patience!" I said, "everything in its turn. To-morrow we shall be able to see what we can do. But tell me, have you seen anything of our late companions?"

"Not a trace of human beings on land or sea; but there are some



THE AGOUTI.

hogs on the shore, the only living things I have seen. They are of a particular breed, for this little fellow I have shot has feet more like a hare than a pig. I saw him moving about on the grass, sometimes sitting upright washing its face with its paws, sometimes routing in the ground for roots, and had I not been afraid of its escaping me, I should like to have taken it alive."

"I have examined the animal," said Ernest, "and I do not think he is very much like a sucking-pig, for his skin is very soft. He has not the teeth of a pig; and, if I do not mistake, it is the same animal which is called an agouti in my natural history."

"A-ha!" cried Fritz, "listen to the professor; but I believe he is mistaken this time."

"Gently, gently," I said. "Ernest is right, and you must not be in such a hurry with your jokes. I have no knowledge of the agouti, except from pictures; but the young of the wild boar is very like it. This animal is a native of America, and lives in the hollow trunks of trees, is of a very domestic nature, and is very good to eat."

While we were thus discussing the agouti, Jack was trying to open an oyster with his knife, but all his efforts were unsuccessful.

I laughed at his attempts, and placing a few oysters upon the hot embers, they soon opened of their own accord.

"There, boys," I said, "now you can feast on one of the greatest luxuries." At the same time I swallowed one myself, with some reluctance, whereat my children were much surprised. I remarked that I did not wish to influence anybody, but for my part I had had enough of them. The longer they thought of it, the less they liked it, while at the same time each one wanted a shell for a spoon. Jack set the example, though he swallowed the oyster more like a dose of medicine than anything else. The others quickly followed his example, declaring that the oysters were excellent. The empty shells supplied us with spoons, which we hastened to use, though we burnt our fingers considerably. Ernest drew from his pocket the great mussel shell, which he had hidden, and filling it, stepped aside to let the soup cool, laughing at the others as he did so.

"You have taken precautions for yourself," I said; "but you have forgotten to supply us with similar plates."

"There are plenty where this came from," he replied.

"That is precisely what I blame in you," I said. "You only think of yourself. You deserve that your selfishness should be punished, and your soup given to our servants, I mean the dogs. You can afford to wait as well as we."

My reproaches struck home, and, without a murmur, he placed the shell before the dogs, which licked up the soup in an instant. But what was that to satisfy their hunger! While we were looking across the bay, they caught sight of the agouti, and began to devour it before we could interfere. The children no sooner perceived this, than they cried out. Fritz was furious, and wanted to kill them. As it was, he struck them so violently with his gun that the barrel was bent; and as they retreated, he pelted them with stones till they were out of reach, making the rocks echo with their cries. I took him to task seriously about his giving way to his temper, which I had previously remarked; and I scolded him severely upon setting such an example to his younger brothers. He had not only rendered the gun useless, but had nearly killed the poor animals, which were so useful to us. He confessed his errors, and begged pardon, which I granted on condition that he would make his

peace with the dogs. He immediately took a piece of biscuit in each hand, and shortly afterwards returned with the faithful animals. I noticed that Fritz's eyes were wet with tears.

"Oh, father," he cried, "before even they touched the biscuit, they licked my hand. How could I have been so cruel to the poor things!"

"Anger is always wicked," I replied. "Do not forget that, my dear boy."

By the time we had finished our meal, the sun was setting; the fowls and ducks were all collecting around us, and then my wife, producing the mysterious bag she had brought from the wreck, distributed handfuls of corn amongst them. I praised her highly for her forethought, and recommended her to be careful of the precious grain, which we could sow, as we could procure biscuit, which would be equally acceptable, for the fowls.

The pigeons took refuge in the crevices of the rocks, the cocks and hens went to roost on the top of the tent, the ducks and geese retired to the weeds beside the stream; we ourselves were also quite ready to go to bed. We loaded the firearms, and placed them by our sides all ready for use. We then knelt down all together to our evening prayer, and, committing ourselves to the protection of Heaven, retired to our tent for the night.

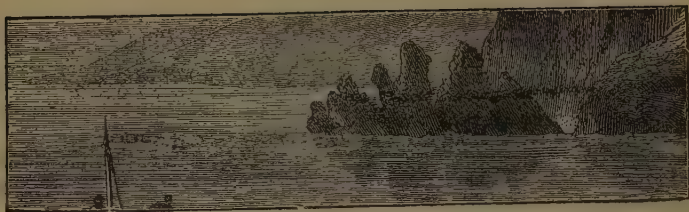
My children remarked with astonishment that the night fell suddenly; there was no twilight.

"That makes me think," I said, "that we are not very far from the equator, or at least that we are between the two tropics. Twilight is produced by the dispersion of the sun's rays in the atmosphere; the more obliquely they fall, the more the refraction extends; the more perpendicular they are, the more quickly they disperse. The country between the tropics, which is directly beneath the zenith, must consequently lose the sunlight very quickly."

I went out more than once to see that all was right, and then fastened up the opening of the tent. The cock, wakened by the moonlight, began to crow, and then I lay down.

Although the day had been very warm, the night was quite fresh, and we all suffered a good deal from the cold. However, sleep soon fell upon my wife and children; and, notwithstanding all my efforts to keep awake, my eyelids also closed, and our first night on land was passed safely and without alarm.





CHAPTER III.

An Excursion Projected.—Jack Reproved.—Crossing the River.—Where are the Crew?—Cocoa-nuts.—Calabash Tree.—Gourds.—Pots and Pans.—A Fertile Country.—Sugar Canes.—The Monkeys.—Towards Home again.



HE crowing of the cock awoke me at daybreak; and my wife and I immediately consulted as to our future proceedings. We were both of opinion that the first thing to do was to seek for our late companions, while at the same time we could explore the country, before arranging any definite plan of action.

My wife was quite of opinion, also, that it was no use for the whole family to go on this expedition; so she agreed to remain behind with Ernest and the younger ones, while I took Fritz with me, as the strongest and the most adroit.

I therefore begged her to make ready our breakfast as quickly as possible, while I awakened the children.

I asked Jack what had become of his lobster, and he ran to fetch it from a hiding-place in the rock, where he had placed it for fear of the dogs devouring it, as they had attempted to treat the agouti.

"Very well," I said; "you can be very thoughtful when it affects your own interests, I see. Happy are they who can profit by the misfortunes of others. However, you must give up the great lobster claws, which I promised you, to serve us for food on our proposed excursion."

"An excursion!" they cried. "An excursion! We will all go together!" and they began jumping about me like so many young kids.

"This time it is impossible," I said, "that you should accompany us. Fritz and I are strong enough to cope with any danger, but you are not; and besides, a journey which we can make would be too long for you; so you must remain here with your mother. We will leave Bill with you as a protection, and take Turk with us. Such a defender as he, and a loaded gun, will inspire some respect."

Jack generously placed the whole lobster at our service, although Ernest said very sagely, "No doubt they will find plenty of cocoa-nuts, as Robinson Crusoe did on his island, which will be much better than your lobster."

I told Fritz to take his gun, a game bag, and a hatchet. He blushed, and asked my leave to take some other gun in lieu of his own, which was useless. I granted his request, and told him besides to put a pair of pistols in his belt, while I did the same, and a bottle of water and some biscuits in addition.

Just as we had completed our preparations, my wife came to inform me that breakfast was ready. The lobster proved to be so very tough and of such bad flavour, that no one was sorry to see us take it with us. Fritz was of opinion that we should start at once, before the sun got too hot; but I reminded him that we had forgotten one very essential thing. He thought I meant that we had not taken farewell of his mother and brother.

"That is not it," said Ernest; "we have not said our prayers."

"Quite right," I said; "that is it. We are too ready to forget God, to whose care we owe all the blessings of this life; and we have never had greater need of His assistance and protection than now."

As I spoke, Jack began to walk up and down behind me crying out, "Ding, dong, ding, dong; to prayers, to prayers."

"Foolish child," I said, "do not turn serious things into ridicule in that manner. As a punishment for your buffoonery, you shall not kneel down to pray with us. Go farther off."

Confused by my reprimand, Jack went aside and knelt down apart. While we prayed, I could hear him weeping, and asking God's pardon for his ill-timed levity. When we had finished, he came to me, promising amendment if I would forgive him. I did so, recommending him to be more serious under the sad circumstances in which we were placed, and above all things to try to deserve God's blessing. I then assembled the little ones round their mother, and strictly enjoined them to be obedient in every way. I directed them to load the guns and to keep in the neighbourhood of our boat.

At length we separated, but not without many tears and some hesitation, for we did not know what dangers might await us in this unknown land. We could hear them calling after us, until the noise of the river drowned their voices.

The banks of the stream were so high and so steep that we were obliged to skirt it for some time before we could find a place to cross, and I was very glad that my family were situated as they were, and defended by such high rocks.

When we reached the other side we passed through very high grass,

half dried up by the sun, and we were glad to turn down towards the beach again, where we hoped to meet with fewer obstacles. Suddenly we heard a great noise some few paces behind us, and saw the grass greatly agitated. Fear seized us both. I stopped, and was pleased to see that Fritz shouldered his gun and turned steadily on the foe. But it was only our faithful Turk, who had been forgotten in the grief of



departure, and who had been sent after us. I loaded the trusty dog with caresses, and I praised Fritz for his courage in not having foolishly fired, and perhaps deprived us of a valuable companion, or run away into actual danger.

"You see," added I, "what terrible enemies our passions are to men. Yesterday, anger, and to-day, fear, might have wrought us incalculable harm."

As we chatted thus, we arrived at the sea shore, which we followed carefully, admiring the beauty of the country as we proceeded, and looking round on every side in the hope of perceiving some traces of our companions. We carefully examined the sand to find footprints of the men, but without success.

"If I were to fire my gun from time to time," said Fritz, "they might hear us if they have taken refuge anywhere in the neighbourhood."

"Very likely," I said, "if your signal would only bring our friends; but at the same time it might attract a band of savages, which would not be so agreeable."

"But," said Fritz, "after all, why should we trouble ourselves to run after people who abandoned us so cruelly?"

"For many reasons, my dear boy," I replied. "In the first place, because it is not Christianlike to render evil for evil; and also because they would be useful to us, and assist us in many ways; but above all, because they are probably in want of our assistance, as they took nothing from the wreck."

"But while we are here roaming about on the bank," continued Fritz, "we might be returning to the vessel and saving the animals."

"When many duties call us at the same time, we ought to take the most important, and it is much more important to save the lives of men than those of the lower animals. Besides, we have already given the beasts food sufficient for several days, and the sea shows no signs of displacing the vessel at present."

We quitted the coast. After having gone about two leagues, continually on the alert, we entered a small wood. We had now been walking nearly two hours, and the sun was already getting hot, we therefore called a halt at the side of a limpid stream, which ran through the wood. Around us flew a number of unknown birds, which sang and chirped, and played a thousand antics, but they were less remarkable for the sweetness of their notes than for the variety and beauty of their plumage.

Fritz fancied that he saw a monkey in the branches of the tree, and what made me think this likely was that Turk began to jump about and bark in the direction indicated. Fritz rose and went forward to assure himself of the fact, and as he advanced with his head in the air, his foot came violently in contact with some rounded substance, and he fell heavily to the ground.

He picked it up, and bringing it to me, asked me if it were not a nest of some great bird.

"Your nest," I said, laughing at his discomfiture, "is simply a cocoa nut."

By a natural disposition of youthful conceit, Fritz persisted in his opinion, saying, "But there are birds which build round nests like this."

"Yes, no doubt," I said; "but that is no reason for believing that everything that is round is a bird's nest. Do you not remember having read that the cocoa nut is wrapped in a fibrous covering, over a thin shell? The shell of this one is broken, and that is the reason the covering is so bristly. The nut is no doubt an old one, and if you will break through the fibres, you will find the kernel."

Fritz obeyed me, and the event proved that I was right. When we had separated the fibres, we found the kernel dry and uneatable.

"But," said Fritz, "I always thought that cocoa nuts were full of a delicious milk. Is this, then, after all, the fruit of which Professor Ernest spoke in such high terms?"

"You are right in thinking that the nuts contain milk," I replied; "for you would find it if you were to pick up a nut which was not quite ripe, but the riper the fruit gets the more the milk is absorbed, and the kernel is formed by degrees as it dries up. If the ripe nut fall on a fertile ground, the kernel will grow, but if it fall on sterile land it dries up like the one we have just seen."

"What!" cried Fritz in astonishment, "has the kernel sufficient force to pierce a covering as thick as that? I wonder that all the kernels do not dry up, the shell is so hard."

"The stone of the peach is not less hard," I replied, "and nevertheless the kernel will grow, if it falls on suitable ground."

"Yes," replied Fritz; "but the peach stones are naturally formed in two pieces, so that they separate under the action of fermentation."

I congratulated my son on the justice of his remark, and I added, "The cocoa nut has a different structure, it is true; but do you not see those three holes near the lower end? At that place the shell is less thick, and is not so difficult to pierce."

I was happy to see that my son followed with great interest these demonstrations, which initiated him to a knowledge of the wise laws of creation.

We continued our route, pushing a way through the wood, which appeared very extensive. We were frequently obliged to cut a way with our hatchets through the innumerable boughs which crossed and recrossed our path. At every step some beautiful plant or strange tree presented itself. Fritz continued his questions, to all of which I responded to the best of my ability, and we thus unconsciously made great progress in natural history. Fritz's astonishment increased at every step. We began to search for another cocoa nut, sufficiently fresh to afford us the milk; and after some time we were fortunate enough to find one. We ate it with pleasure. Although it tasted a little rancid, it refreshed us, and gave us strength to continue our march. After some time we found ourselves on the beach, the wood thinned away

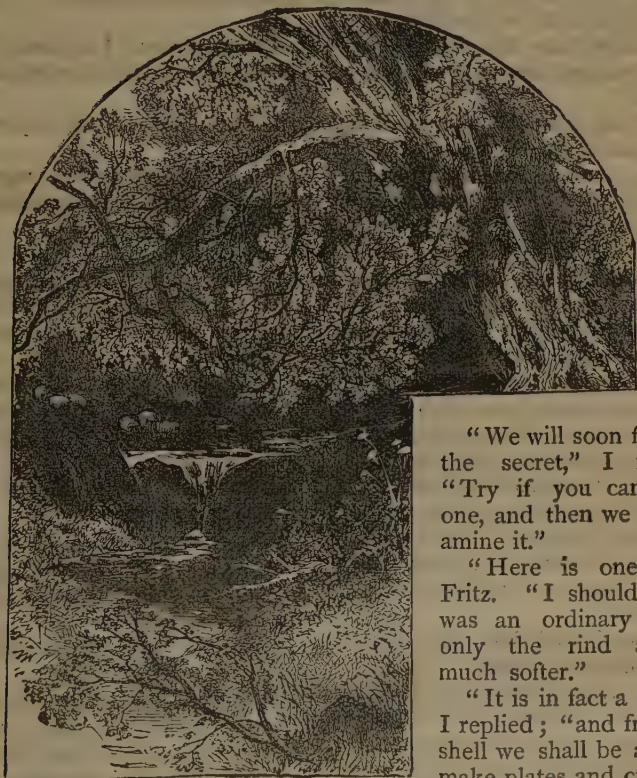
a little to the right, and we could see here and there some trees of a peculiar species.

"Oh, papa," cried Fritz; "what are those trees with such curious swellings on the trunk?"

"Let us go and examine them."

As we approached, I discovered to my great delight that they were gourd trees.

Fritz could not understand what the wens were. "Are they excrescences merely," he said, "or sponges, or what?"



"We will soon find out the secret," I replied. "Try if you can reach one, and then we will examine it."

"Here is one," cried Fritz. "I should say it was an ordinary gourd, only the rind appears much softer."

"It is in fact a gourd," I replied; "and from the shell we shall be able to make plates and cups and bottles. The savages also

use them for boiling water in, and cooking their food. And why do you think the fruit is attached to the trunk?"

"Because I suppose the weight would break the branches," replied Fritz.

"Well guessed," I said.

"But," continued Fritz, "are they not good to eat?"

"Yes," I said, "they are eaten, but they are not of a very agreeable taste."

"But how is it possible that the savages manage to cook their food in them?" he said. "Would not the gourd be burnt by the fire?"

"But they are not exposed to the fire."

"How can they cook in them, if they are not near the fire? I cannot understand that," replied Fritz.

"I did not say that the food is cooked without fire," I replied; "only that it was not necessary to put into the fire the calabash in which it is cooked."

"I really cannot understand it," replied he; "it is quite beyond my comprehension. It is magic."

"No, there is very little sorcery in it. It is always the way with men; so soon as they cannot exactly explain a thing without taking the trouble to reflect, they put it down to a miracle or sorcery."

"But I believe it, since you tell me."

"That is to say, that to get to the end more quickly, you are ready to swear by your master's words; that is an excellent way to save yourself from thinking. But I will enlighten you a little. When the savages wish to cook anything in one of these gourds, they cut it in half, and to each half they attach a handle, and they put into it whatever they wish to boil, as in a saucepan,—fish or flesh, as the case may be. They then drop into the gourd red-hot stones until the water boils, so the meat is cooked but the gourd remains unharmed."

"That is very curious," said Fritz; "but I believe I should have found it out if I had thought a little about it."

"Yes," I replied; "you might, just as the friends of Columbus found out how to make an egg stand on its end. Do not forget that the most simple ideas are almost always those which took most trouble to discover."

As we chatted thus, we each of us began to fashion a calabash into some domestic utensil.

Fritz tried to cut one with his knife, but he did not make much progress, he only blunted the blade, which also slipped frequently; and he exclaimed that he would not have thought such a soft-looking thing was so hard in reality, and at last he threw it from him with impatience.

But I proceeded in another fashion. Taking a piece of cord from my pocket, I drew it tightly round the gourd; then striking it with the handle of my knife an incision was made. I then drew the cord more

tightly, and again rapped it with my knife, so that at length the nut separated into two unequal parts.

"What on earth made you think of that plan?" said Fritz; "you have made a first-rate saucepan, and an excellent ladle."

"Now you see," said I, "how useful my reading has proved. I have often read that savages and negroes, who have no knives, are in the habit of dividing the calabash in precisely the same manner as you have seen me do."

Fritz now wanted to know how to make bottles. "I understand very well," he said, "that in drying the calabash we must extract the core through a hole; but how can we give the proper form to a fruit naturally so round? How can we succeed in making a neck to our bottle?"

I then informed him that to arrive at the proper shape, the savages tie a band tightly round the young soft gourd sufficiently near the stalk, so that the rest of the gourd will develop itself, and the gourds can be made with long or short necks according as they are tied.

We made a number of porringers, which I exposed to the sun, having first filled them with fine sand so as to keep them in proper shape while they dried. We then marked the places where we left them, so as to be able to find them on our return.

This idea of leaving them pleased Fritz, who did not wish to carry such an inconvenient burden. We buried our new china ware in the sand, and abandoned it to its fate.

As we continued our march, Fritz attempted to convert part of a calabash into a spoon, while I tried to make another out of a piece of cocoa-nut shell, but I cannot say that we were either of us very successful. However clumsy they were, our spoons were nevertheless far superior to the oyster shells which we had been obliged to use the day before.

Fritz jumped for joy. "Fancy!" he exclaimed, "plates, dishes, cups; will not mother be delighted? She will have something to serve the soup in now." Then thinking of little Frank, he added, "Let us look for a small calabash, father. Our spoons will extend his little mouth from ear to ear. Let us try if we cannot make one to suit him."

We recalled the manufactures of savages which we had seen in museums, and were obliged to confess that the natives were our masters in spoon making. However, under the circumstances we must be content with a little.

And now Fritz had a happy thought of preparing two large dishes for Master Turk and Bill, who still held him in some fear.

When his work was finished, Fritz took some biscuit and made some soup with it, and got some fresh water for Turk. When the dog saw it he looked gratefully at his young master, and licked his hand by way of grace for the unexpected treat. Evidently all was forgotten.

After having advanced for about four hours more, we reached a little tongue of land which ran some distance into the sea, and on which was a hill of considerable elevation. From the top of this appeared to be the most convenient place to take a survey, and we ascended, but not without some trouble.

When we reached the top we had a very extensive view. We looked on every side for some traces of human beings; but in vain. But on the other hand, Nature was spread out before us in all her magnificence; and notwithstanding the absence of culture, she discovered riches unknown in European climates. The rich verdure of the shores, the placid calmness of the sea, on which the sunlight played, and of which the opposite coast was lost in the blueness of the sky, all this would have filled us with lively satisfaction but for the desire to see our shipwrecked companions; and this reflection imparted a tinge of sadness to our joy.

But we could not help feeling satisfied as we contemplated the fertility of the country, for there was no fear now that we should perish from hunger.

"There," I said, "we must make up our minds to live in this island. Heaven has so willed it; so let us submit courageously to the will of Providence. Everything is for the best, and we must make ourselves as happy as possible in our island.

"It matters very little to me," said Fritz, "if we remain in this place; so long as Heaven spares you and mother, I shall trouble my head very little about our late companions. We are more in number than Adam and Eve were; and who knows but that, like the Patriarch, we may be the father of a great nation."

The idea of an Abraham fifteen years old made me smile.

"It is well spoken, my dear boy; you give me courage, and who knows for what we may be reserved. But come along, my budding patriarch; let us get out of the sunlight, or we shall be broiled before our time. Let us repose under the shade of the wood and finish our cocoa-nut repast, so that we may recruit our forces for our return."

"Dear father," cried Fritz, throwing himself upon my neck, "we will never complain; with you and mother, what can my brothers and I require more. So there, we shall be very happy, and as we grow older will be able to work, so as to save you all trouble."

Dear boy, his heart was in the right place. I folded him in my arms and thanked God for having given me such a good son. We descended towards a little group of palm trees which we could see at some distance off; but to reach it we were obliged to traverse a marshy ground covered with long grass which greatly impeded us. We advanced slowly and with great caution, for fear of stepping upon a serpent. We continually

sent Turk on in front so as to give us warning, and I cut one of the largest reeds that I could find to serve as a weapon in lieu of my gun. No sooner had I cut it than I found my hand covered with a glutinous liquid. I tasted it, and at once perceived that we were traversing a



grove of sugar canes. I repeated the experiment frequently, each time becoming more certain of the truth, and I felt much refreshed.

I did not wish to announce my happy discovery to Fritz, as I pre-

ferred he should make it for himself. As he marched before me I called out to him to cut a reed for his defence ; he obeyed immediately, and seizing the cane brandished it about his head, striking right and left to frighten the serpents. The effect of this exercise was to cover his hand with the juice of the cane.

He tasted it without saying anything, and then all of a sudden he called out, " Papa, papa, these are sugar canes—just taste them. How glad mother and my brothers will be when we take some home."

As he spoke he broke his cane into pieces and sucked the juice with such avidity that it ran all over his chin, and I was obliged to stop him for fear he should make himself ill.

" If I were in your place," I said, " I should not go so fast. There is moderation in all things ; even in the most innocent enjoyments."

" But I was so thirsty, and the juice was good," he said.

" Your excuse is simply that of a drunkard," I replied. " They drink to excess because they are thirsty and find the wine good. But what good are their excuses ? Their conduct is no better."

" At any rate we may collect some sugar canes, so that we may refresh ourselves occasionally as we go along, and that those at home may partake of our pleasure."

" By all means," I said. " I have no objection to that ; but will not the burden be too heavy to carry for such a distance ?"

Notwithstanding this hint Fritz gathered at least a dozen of the finest canes he could find and tied them up in a bundle to carry home. We soon arrived at the palm thicket ; we entered and seated ourselves to enjoy our meal. Suddenly a tribe of large monkeys, frightened at our approach and by the barking of Turk, climbed up the trees with such extraordinary rapidity that we could scarcely follow their movements. Once in a place of safety, they began to grind their teeth and salute us with horrible cries. I at once noticed that the trees were cocoa-nut trees, and I thought of making the monkeys pull the fruit for us.

Fritz on his part seized his gun, threw down his bundle of sugar canes, and had brought the piece to his shoulder, when I interfered and prevented his shooting.

" What are you about ?" said I ; " what good would it do you to kill one of those animals ?"

" Oh !" he said, " why did you not leave me alone. Monkeys are such nasty things. Look how they threaten and chatter at us."

" And can such menaces excite the resentment of wise Fritz ! I am indeed astonished. So long as the animal does not hurt us there can be no object in killing it. I have thought of a much better means of encountering them, and they will be much more useful than if you had killed a dozen of them "

"Useful!" exclaimed Fritz, "make the monkeys useful! how can you do that?"



"You will see," I replied. "I will try at any rate; but take care of your head. If my stratagem succeeds, instead of their skins they will give us some cocoa nuts."

I accordingly collected a quantity of stones, and began to throw them at the monkeys, which got in a great rage, although the missiles did not reach half-way up the trees. Immediately we were saluted with a regular hail of cocoa nuts, which showered upon all sides.

Fritz laughed heartily at the success of my stratagem, and when the hail of cocoa nuts had abated, he collected as many as he could carry. We now sought a spot in which we could comfortably enjoy our repast, and we opened the shells with a hatchet. We first sucked out the milk through the holes at the end of the cocoa nuts, which we pierced with our knives. We were astonished to find it so little to our taste. The cream, which adheres to the interior, appeared to us far superior. When we had opened the nuts, we collected this cream with our roughly-made spoons, and with the juice of the sugar cane it proved a delicious relish.

Master Turk received the remainder of the lobster, which we did not care to eat, and he even partook of morsels of sugar cane and cocoa nut which we threw to him from time to time, and which he crunched with avidity.

I collected such of the cocoa nuts as had long stalks, and threw them over my shoulder. Fritz took up what remained of the sugar canes, and, refreshed by the repast we had enjoyed, we set out to rejoin our family.





CHAPTER IV.

Carrying the Canes.—Vinegar for Wine.—Turk and the Monkeys.—The Young Ape.—Return to our Tent.—Sea Birds.—A Nocturnal Alarm.—The Jackals.



RITZ very soon found his bundle of canes getting very heavy on his shoulder, and continued to shift it each moment from one to the other. Then he took it under his arm, then he stopped altogether, sighed deeply, and said,—

“I could not have believed that a packet of sugar canes would be so heavy; but I wish to carry them home, so that mother and the others may taste them.”

“Patience and courage, Fritz,” I said; “remember the burden that Æsop carried, which was so heavy at the commencement of his journey, and so light at the end. Your load will diminish in the same way, for we shall be obliged to refresh ourselves frequently before we get home. I asked him first for a cane to serve me as a walking-stick, and told him he might also take one for himself.”

“You will be able to carry the others,” I said, “if you will place them on your shoulder, so that they will balance with your gun,—that will relieve you to a great extent. The spirit of invention was not given us to remain idle, and we must make it supply the want of strength in this desert island.”

As we went along, Fritz remarked with what enjoyment I appeared to suck my sugar cane, and what a quantity of juice I extracted from it.

“That is capital, papa,” he cried. “I wish I could do the same.” But though he sucked with all his force, he could not extract any juice from his cane.

“What is the reason,” he said, at last, “that I cannot get any juice out of my cane, though it appears quite as full?”

“Perhaps because you do not go the right way about it.”

“Ah! I see what it is,” he said. “I have got the idea. If I make a little hole, and let the air in, then the juice will come.”

"Quite right," I said; "but how do you do it?"

"How have you done it?" he said.

"You must look," I replied. "I wish you to find out for yourself."

"Well," said he, "I believe if I were to make an incision above the nearest knot, the air can enter there,—then if I suck, it will rush in through the opening in the cane, and carry the juice into my mouth."

"Quite so," I replied.

Fritz was quite delighted at having found this out of his own accord. The juice came quickly, and he took another cane to suck in the same manner. But he was somewhat astonished to find how quickly they diminished. He would liked to have carried them all home.

"When there is nothing more to suck," said I, "they will be only fit for firewood, and the heat of the sun will very soon turn the juice sour, so do not worry yourself about your diminished load. If one or two remain, to show them at home, that will be sufficient."

"Well, if the sugar turn bad," replied Fritz, "I shall at any rate have the satisfaction of carrying home a good supply of cocoa-nut milk in my tin flask, and that will be my treat."

"Do not flatter yourself. You will find that in all probability you will have vinegar in your flask instead of cocoa-nut milk, by the time you get home; for out of its natural receptacle the cocoa-nut milk turns very quickly."

"This is a fatality," he exclaimed. "I will look at it at once."

He loosened the cork of the flask, with the object of tasting its contents, when the stopper flew out with a loud bang, and the milk followed, foaming like champagne.

"Hulloh!" I said, "my prediction is very soon verified. But take care," I added, "do not drink too much of that,—it will go to your head very quickly, and you will suffer for it to-morrow."

"Oh, papa, do taste it!" he exclaimed; "it is excellent. So far from being sour, it is just like fine, new wine."

"That is in consequence of the fermentation. The same phenomenon is produced in the juice of the cocoa nut, the sugar cane, and even in honey mixed with water. This fermentation will be repeated once again, as we proceed, in consequence of the heat, and by the time we arrive at home, it will be nothing but sour milk or ill-smelling water, so while it lasts, let us make the most of it. It will keep us up, if we take it in moderation."

By degrees, and without our perceiving it, we had reached the spot where we had left our plates, pots, and calabashes buried in the sand. We found them quite firm and hard, and were able to carry them in our game bags without trouble. But scarcely had we entered the little wood in which we had breakfasted, than Turk darted amongst a troupe

of monkeys, which had not seen us approach. He surprised them at their gambols, and before we could come up, their terrible adversary



had already strangled and began to devour an old female. A young ape, which had clung to his mother, and thus probably retarded her flight,

threw itself into the grass, and watched, as it chattered with rage, the cruel death of its parent.

Fritz ran as hard as he could to pull the dog off, and in his excitement he threw away his hat, his bottle, and the sugar canes; but all in vain. He arrived too late, the deed of blood had been committed. He arrived only just in time to afford me a more comical scene. No sooner did the young ape perceive him, than it jumped upon his back, and held so tightly to his hair, that neither the lad's cries nor his blows served to release him from his new acquaintance.

I could not help laughing at this strange scene. I saw at once that there was no danger, and the terror of Fritz and the grimaces of the little ape afforded me intense amusement. It was not without some emotion that he attempted to release himself from the little assailant, which was perfectly harmless. The little ape had no intention of hurting him; but separated from its mother, it seemed to demand from Fritz aid and protection against the terrible enemy which had made it an orphan.

"There is a trait in the animal's disposition," I said. "It has lost its mother, and has chosen you for its adopted father. I wonder what resemblance it can see in you?"

"I suppose the animal has noticed that I am a good boy, and in capable of hurting any animal that puts itself under my protection; but it is tearing my hair and makes me feel very uncomfortable. I wish you would persuade it to let go its hold."

I caressed the unwelcome guest, offered it something to eat, and at length succeeded in disengaging it from its position. I took it in my arms like a little child, and felt much pity for it, for it was no bigger than a kitten, and quite incapable of taking care of itself.

"What can we do for you, poor little creature?" said I; "for we must think twice in our poverty before admitting a useless mouth into the family circle."

But Fritz interrupted me immediately, saying, "Oh, papa, I hope you will consent to my taking it home. I will take great care of it. I will give it cocoa-nut milk until we get some milk from the cow on board the ship. Perhaps its instinct will assist it to discover suitable roots, and it will die if we abandon it, and we ought not to hesitate to take it with us."

"Very well, Fritz," I replied. "I am glad to see at once your good feeling and the wisdom of your observations, and I consent to the adoption of your little *protégé*. But you must take care how you bring him up, as he may be an acquisition or otherwise, according to the way in which you train him."

Meanwhile Turk was finishing his horrible repast, and we did not

disturb him ; for to interfere would have been dangerous, and he had had very little food all that day. We left him to finish his meal at his leisure. The young ape returned to its former position on Fritz's shoulder, and I took up the bundle of sugar canes. Scarcely had we proceeded half a mile when Turk rejoined us ; his jaws were still covered with blood. We received him coldly, and reproached him for his cruelty ; but he took very little notice of us, and walked quietly behind Fritz.

The young ape was disturbed by the near approach of his enemy, and took refuge on Fritz's arm, to which it clung tightly. Grief excited the young man's imagination, and he took a cord and passed one end round Turk's neck, put the monkey on the dog's back, and placed the other end of the cord in the rider's hand, and said to Turk, " You have made



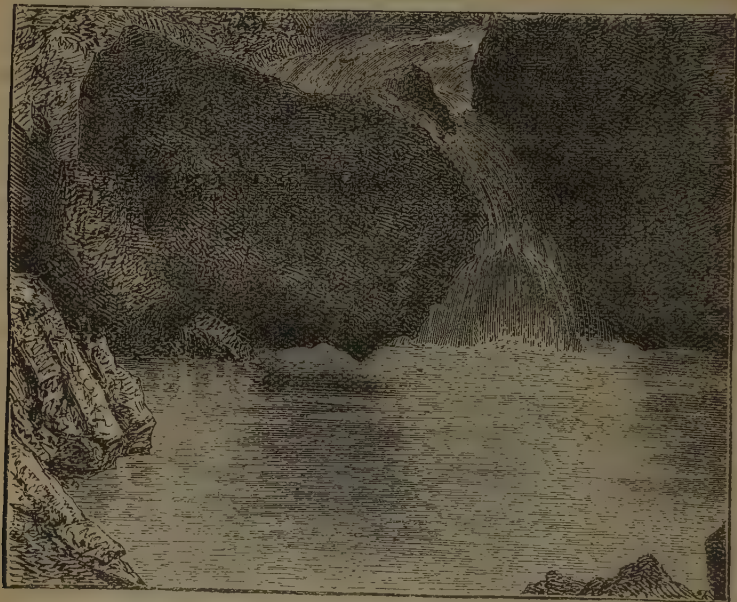
this little ape an orphan ; you have devoured its mother. We must forgive you, because you do not know better ; but look at this little ape, and promise me to love and respect it in the future. It is too young, fortunately, to retain any recollection of the evil you have done it. If you are good and repent, I will undertake as a reward to make you some very good soup, which will quite take away your taste for such raw flesh."

Turk crouched at Fritz's feet as if he understood what he said to him, his humid eyes beamed with intelligence and glanced from his young master to the ape which Fritz was now caressing, and after some little difficulty in arranging the monkey on Turk's back, the procession moved on.

This experiment made me laugh, and I thought it well conceived. "We shall return to our tent," said I to Fritz, "like showmen at fairs; your brothers will be delighted at the sight."

"Yes," said Fritz; "and Jack, who is so fond of making grimaces, will now have a model in the little monkey, which is quite a proficient in the art."

"You must not speak thus of your brother," I replied. "If you wish to live together and to love each other, it is a bad plan to hold him up



to ridicule. Mutual forbearance is a guarantee of union and happiness, for we all have our failings. So take example from your mother and myself, and be indulgent towards your brother. Such satirical remarks are ill-timed and not what I should have expected from you."

Fritz confessed that he had spoken without reflection, and then he hastened to turn the conversation.

We naturally spoke about the cruelty of the Spaniards, who at the time they discovered America used to train dogs to hunt down the natives in a similar way that Turk had hunted the monkey.

I was then obliged to tell Fritz all that I knew about the habits of

monkeys ; and chatting in this way we beguiled the length of the route, and arrived almost without knowing it on the bank of the stream we had crossed in the morning. Bill, the dog we had left behind us, was the first to salute us by his barking, and Turk responded with such energy that the little monkey, terribly alarmed, sprang upon Fritz's shoulders, and showed no wish to get down again ; but Turk, after looking about him a little, set off and swam across the river to rejoin his comrade and to announce our arrival.

Soon our dear ones appeared, one after another, on the opposite bank. They were delighted to see us return in safety, and ascended the river towards the place where we had crossed in the morning. We met upon the opposite bank, and were speedily in each other's arms. But scarcely had the children examined what we carried, than they jumped for joy at the sight of the little ape, which was still clinging tightly to Fritz.

"A monkey!—a real live monkey ! How did you get him, Fritz ? What a nice little fellow he is. I wish we had something to give him."

"But what are those sticks, and those great bowls, that papa is carrying?" and then came a volley of questions to which it was impossible for us to reply.

When the first transports of joy had somewhat subsided, I said, "I am delighted to see you all again, my dear children. We return to you safe and sound, thank God, and have brought you all kinds of nice things. But we have failed in the chief object of our expedition. We have not been able to discover the least trace of our shipwrecked companions."

"God's will be done," said my wife. "Let us not trouble ourselves further, but let us thank God who has so mercifully permitted us to be again united. How I have wept, and how anxious I have been during your absence, and prayed for your safe return. Let us now relieve you of your burdens ; and come and tell us your adventures. We are rested, for we have scarcely moved all day."

Jack took my gun, Ernest seized the cocoa nuts, Frank took charge of the calabashes, and my wife of the game bag. Fritz distributed the sugar canes, and placed the monkey once again on Turk's back. He gave Ernest his gun, but he, who was already carrying the cocoa nuts, would have refused, if his mother had not volunteered to take care of them.

"Ah !" said Fritz, "if Ernest only knew what he was relinquishing, he would not have given them up so quickly. Why, they are cocoa nuts, Ernest,—real cocoa nuts !"

"Oh, my gracious !" exclaimed Ernest,—"cocoa nuts ! Oh, mamma, give them back to me, please. I will carry them and the gun too."

"No, no, my child," replied his mother. "I do not wish that you should be so greatly fatigued."

"I can throw away these sticks," replied Ernest, "and then I can carry the gun also."

"I would advise you not," said Fritz; "for those long sticks are nothing less than sugar canes. See, I will show you how to suck the sugar out of them."

"What! sugar canes—sugar canes!" cried they all, dancing round Fritz, and they gave him no peace until he had shown them how to suck out the sugar.

Their mother, hearing all these wonderful things, asked me how we had obtained them. So I related to her our adventures, and showed her also what useful things we had made for her. She was perfectly delighted with the plates, and our calabash saucepans, which were of real utility.

When we arrived at the tent, we found an excellent repast awaiting us. On one side of the fire several sorts of fish were cooking on a wooden spit which was supported by two forked sticks. On the other side was a goose roasting, the fat from which was caught in a range of large oyster shells spread underneath it, as a dripping pan. An iron pot was hung over the flames, and gave promise of some excellent soup. Finally, I noticed at the back of the fire one of the chests we had recovered. This had been opened, and I saw that it contained some very good looking Dutch cheeses, carefully packed in lead. All these things appeared to me to leave nothing to be desired by hungry travellers.

"It seems to me," my dear children, "that you have been working very hard during my absence. But I think it a great pity you should have killed one of the geese, for I wished them to be left here to breed."

"You may be quite easy in your mind," replied my wife; "that is not one of our geese that is roasting. Our farm-yard has not been robbed for our dinner. Those fish were caught by Frank, and the goose is a wild bird which Ernest chased and told us what it was, and that it was good to eat."

"Yes, yes, papa," cried the young naturalist; "I believe it is one of those stupid penguins. I knocked it down with a blow of a stick, for it allowed me to get quite close to it."

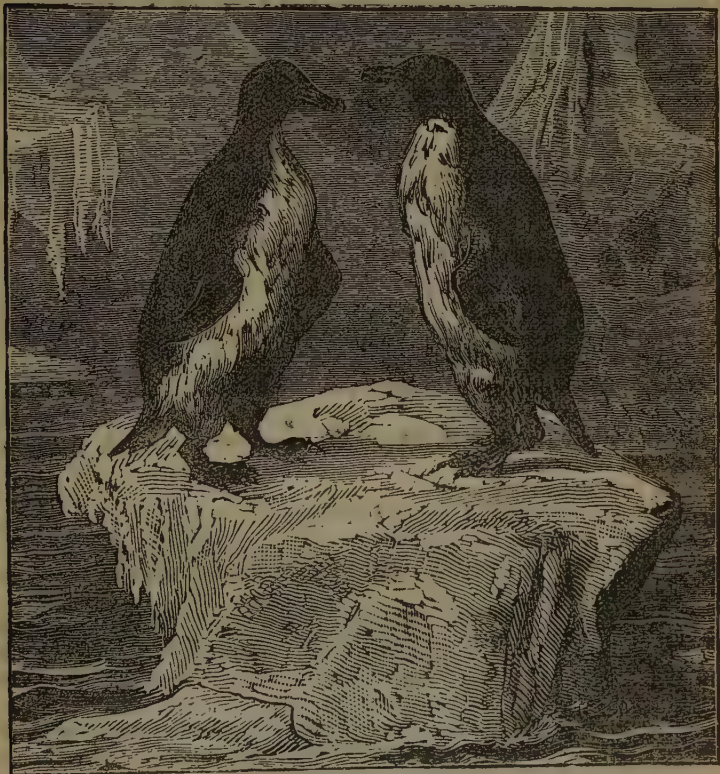
"What were its beak and feet like?" I said.

"It had webbed feet, like all aquatic birds, for the four claws were all joined together by one membrane; it had a long flat and strong beak, somewhat curved at the upper extremity. I have kept the head and neck, so that you may judge for yourself. It is just like the picture of the penguin in my natural history."

"You are quite right, my boy," I replied. "You now see how useful

it is to have a systematic knowledge of nature. When one meets with an unknown object, one can immediately say what it is from its appearance."

"Well," interrupted my wife, "we can resume this discussion by-and-



PENGUINS.

by; but do you not now see how Ernest's eyes are fixed on the cocoa-nuts? Give him the pleasure of examining and tasting them."

"Willingly," I replied. "But you must ask Fritz to show you the way; and do not forget that the little monkey will want some milk."

"But he does not want anything at all," said Jack. "I have offered him everything I could—he will not touch anything."

"Very likely," I said; "for it is most probable that he is too young to eat by himself yet. Fritz must feed him on the cocoa-nut milk, until we find something to suit him."

We now sat down upon the ground; my wife helped the supper in some of our newly manufactured calabashes, which served us well.

The children broke two cocoa nuts, and found them excellent, and made plates out of the shells. They did not even forget the monkey. Each in his turn dipped his calabash spoon into the cocoa-nut milk and were delighted when the little monkey consented to suck some from their handkerchiefs. They now had great hopes of being able to rear him.

We then attacked the fish, which we found fairly good; but the flesh of the penguin was tough and unpalatable, and no one cared much about it. But I set an example, and the children followed it, though the bird was somewhat strong and fishy.

Each one now began to recount his adventures. How the fish had been caught; how the cocoa nuts had been found; how the chest of cheeses had been opened, etc., etc.

Towards the end of the meal, Fritz asked me if we could not have some of his cocoa-nut champagne.

"Taste it first," I replied, "before you offer it to us, and see if it is good."

Scarcely had he put the bottle to his lips when he made a terrible grimace, and cried out,—

"Papa, it is vinegar!"

"Just as I expected," I replied. "But no matter; there is good in everything, and this vinegar will be very nice with our fish, which is rather dry." As I spoke, I turned a little vinegar into my plate, and they all did the same.

The sun disappeared almost immediately we had finished our meal, and we thought it time to prepare for bed. My wife had had the precaution to collect a quantity of dry grass and spread it in the tent, which promised us a more pleasant couch than that of the previous night.

The hens were the first to retire, and went to roost at the top of the tent. The ducks and geese departed to the rushes; and we, after having said our evening prayer, retired to the tent, accompanied by the monkey, which Fritz had decided to call "Knips."

Fritz and Jack took him to bed with them, and carefully protected him from the cold; the rest went to bed as usual, and I closed the door of the tent. Fatigue had made me sleepy, and I went to sleep almost as soon as the others.

We had not been asleep very long, when the cackling of the hens overhead and the barking of the dogs awoke me. I jumped up to go.

to their assistance. My wife and Fritz were already awake. We each seized a gun and ran outside.

By the light of the moon we saw that our two gallant dogs were surrounded by a whole troop of jackals, of which they had already strangled three or four. The others were moving round the dogs in circles, and were seeking to take them at a disadvantage; but the two intrepid animals kept snapping on all sides, and now and then dealing their adversaries a blow with their paws.

"Ah! these are the sort of animals that have disturbed us."

"Now, Fritz!" I cried, "let us both fire together. Take good aim." Our shots rang out, two enemies rolled over on the sand dead, some others were wounded, and the remainder took to flight. Turk and Bill rushed at the wounded ones and tore them to pieces; and when they were dead regaled themselves with a hearty meal.

As now all was quiet, we re-entered our tent. Fritz asked my permission to take his jackal inside, so as to show it to his brothers in the morning; so we dragged it in, and covered it up close to the little sleepers, who had not been awakened by the shots or the barking of the dogs. The jackal was of a very large size, and Fritz dragged it in with difficulty. I remarked to him that Bill and Turk well deserved this jackal, also, as a reward for their vigilance and courage.

We then went to sleep once more, and were not disturbed again during the night.





CHAPTER V.

The Dead Jackal.—The Butter Cask.—A Voyage to the Wreck.—A Cargo.—A Night on the Wreck.



WAS awakened by the crowing of the cock at daybreak, and I immediately called my wife to consult about the proceedings of the day.

"My dear wife," I said, "I can foresee a great deal of trouble and care; my courage almost fails me. An expedition to the wreck is indispensable, even urgent, if we do not wish to lose the cattle; and there still remains quite a quantity of things which would be very useful to us. On the other hand, we have a great deal to do on shore; and first and foremost we ought to set about erecting a better habitation."

"With patience, and with order and activity," replied my wife, "all will go well. Everything will be arranged by degrees. I am not in favour for a return to the wreck, it is true; but I agree with you that it is necessary, so the sooner it is accomplished the better."

So it was agreed that she should remain on shore with the young children, and that Fritz, being the strongest and eldest, should accompany me once more. As for the future, we left that in the hands of Providence, and resolved to make the best of our unhappy situation.

So I awoke the children, crying out, "Get up, get up; it is broad day, and we have much to do. All success depends on early rising; we ought to be ashamed of ourselves to let the sun find us in bed."

The poor children woke with reluctance, yawned, and stretched their arms, and turned round again, just to get rid of their sleepiness.

Fritz was the first up, and ran to look for his jackal, which he found stiffened by the cold night air. He placed it erect at the door of the tent, and waited patiently for his brothers' appearance, to hear what they would say.

But the dogs caught sight of their enemy first, and began to bark and

jump around him. Fritz had great difficulty in keeping them away from the body.

Inside the tent every one was very anxious to know what made the dogs bark so. The children came out one by one, and the little ape put his nose outside the door in a fearsome manner; but the moment he caught sight of the jackal, he darted away into the farthest corner of the tent, and hid himself completely beneath the moss and grass of our beds.

The children were greatly surprised to see the strange animal at the door. Ernest said that it was a fox, Jack declared that it was a wolf, while Frank said that it was a yellow dog.



THE JACKAL.

"A-ha, Master Ernest!" said Fritz, in a quizzical way; "you were quick enough to recognise the agouti; but this time you are at fault. So you take that for a fox, do you?"

"Yes," replied Ernest; "and I believe it is a yellow fox."

"A-ha!" roared Fritz; "a yellow fox, indeed! Listen to the Professor talking of a yellow fox."

"You are very conceited," replied Ernest, "because I have made one mistake; but you would not have known any more yourself if papa had not taught you." And poor Ernest, whose character of "Professor" was gravely compromised, was disconcerted to tears.

"Come, come," I said, in my turn; "you are too susceptible Ernest. You must undergo a little humiliation when you make a mistake. But Fritz, you are too satirical in your jokes. Come and make it up. You will discuss it as uselessly as naturalists have done many times before. The jackal partakes of the nature of all three animals that you have named; so Ernest was right in calling it a fox, so was Jack who took it for a wolf, and Frank who thought it was a dog."

Peace was thus concluded, and then came a host of questions and answers.

"My children," said I at length, "we cannot hope for happiness if we do not commence the day with prayer. So let us pray first, and then set to work."

After prayers the children asked for some breakfast, as they were all very hungry.

On taking counsel we found that there was nothing for breakfast but dry biscuits, which were so hard that we could scarcely bite them. In this extremity, Fritz demanded some cheese. Ernest glided up to the other chest, and soon returned with a radiant countenance.

"Oh, papa," he said, "if we only had some butter to put upon our biscuit, how nice that would be."

"With your eternal 'ifs,'" I said. "A piece of bad cheese would be very much better than a ton of the butter which we have not got."

"But my 'ifs' are not so bad, if you would just open that cask."

"What cask?" I said; "for what purpose?"

"Why that large one over there, which is full of butter. I am sure it is, for I made a little hole in it with my pen-knife, and something came out very like butter."

"You may be right," I said; "your love of good things is of service for once."

We all ran towards the cask, and I soon saw that the young philosopher had not been mistaken. But now another embarrassment arose; how were we to get at the butter without spoiling it? Fritz was of opinion that we ought to loosen the hoops; but I thought that this would cause the staves to separate, and that the heat of the sun would very soon melt all the butter. It appeared to be a much more feasible plan to make a small opening in the bottom of the cask, and to extract some butter with a piece of wood. My plan succeeded, and in a short time we had filled one of our cocoa-nut cups with some excellent salt butter. The biscuits were still rather hard, but by covering them with butter and exposing them to the fire we softened them considerably, and made a very excellent breakfast.

Meanwhile the dogs had remained quite quiet beside us, and made no attempt to join us at breakfast.

I now remarked that they had not come out of their struggle of the previous night unscathed, for they showed traces of the jackals' teeth in many places, particularly on the neck.

My wife suggested that we should dress their wounds with butter, washed first in fresh water to extract the salt. They allowed this to be done, and gratefully licked our hands. In a few days they were completely cured.

"If we could only find some spiked collars on board the ship," said Fritz, "they would be a great help to our brave dogs; for you may depend upon it, that the jackals having once discovered us will come again, and may succeed next time."

"Oh," said Jack, "if mamma will help me, I will undertake to make capital collars."

"With all my heart," replied his mother; "I will help you. Let us see what you will devise."

"That is right, my little man," I said, "exercise your inventive faculties, and if you can devise anything useful, you shall have the glory of it. But it is time that we set to work. Come along, Fritz; your mother and I have decided that it is necessary that you and I should go off to the wreck and see what we can recover. Your brothers will remain here with your mother. Be obedient and active, my boys; and pray to God to keep you safe and sound."

While Fritz was making ready our boat of tubs, I set to work to erect a flag-staff on a rising ground near the beach, and fastened to it a piece of canvas which would serve for a signal between the wreck and the shore. It was arranged that it should be lowered in case of danger, and that three or four shots would recall us immediately. I warned my wife that we might be obliged to remain away all night, if she did not anticipate any danger, as the work might keep us on board. She resigned herself to this arrangement unwillingly.

We took nothing with us but our guns and ammunition, relying upon the stores on board for food. Fritz took the little monkey with him, as he wished to regale it on fresh milk as soon as possible. We quitted the shore in silence and in sadness. Fritz rowed while I steered. When we were at some little distance from the shore, I perceived that a current besides the one which had carried us in was occasioned by the force of the river, and would help us in our way to the ship. I was not mistaken. I steered in the direction of the current, and it carried us along without our having to make any effort during three parts of our voyage. We arrived at the vessel in safety, and entered it by the opening which we had made when we quitted it, and then we made fast our boat. Scarcely had we got out of the tubs than Fritz took the monkey in his arms and ran to the deck where the cow was secured.

I followed him, very happy to see him take such care of the poor creature. All the animals were delighted to see us, though it was quite evident they had not suffered from want of food during our absence. The monkey found the cow's milk excellent, and drank it with great delight and the most lively grimaces.

We remained some time in enjoyment of this sight and then supplied the animals with fresh water and provisions. We then thought we would have something to eat ourselves, so as to give us strength for the work we had to do.

We consulted upon the best mode of commencing operations. Fritz suggested that we should first provide a sail for our boat.

"But why should you want to do that immediately?" I said. "There are a hundred things much more important to do before that."

"Because," he replied, "I noticed, as we crossed over here, that the wind blew strongly in our faces, but notwithstanding the current bore us along. Now, I thought, on our return the current will be against us, but the wind will be in our favour. Our boat will be heavy when we have embarked so many things, and I think that my unassisted efforts will be unable to row us back again."

"I understand," I said; "you wish to save yourself the labour. But nevertheless there is reason in what you say. You will not be strong enough to row back to shore, and if I leave the rudder, and go to your assistance, it would be dangerous; so I will take your advice."

So I first took a spar which appeared to me suitable for a mast, and another thinner one, upon which I could hoist the sail. Fritz bored a hole in a plank, into which we could "step" the mast, while I went into the sail room and cut out a large triangular piece of canvas, which I rigged on to the mast in such a manner that I could raise or lower it at pleasure. I then returned to the impatient Fritz.

He had done his work fairly well. All was arranged as I had designed, and we had now a powerful auxiliary to reach the land.

While I was fixing the sail, Fritz took the telescope and took a survey of the shore. He came back to me and said that all appeared quiet, and at the same time he presented me with a small red streamer to serve as a flag. This little bit of vanity in the midst of our distress made me smile. I saw that human nature was the same under all circumstances; but to please Fritz, I attached the flag to the mast and began to quiz him a little.

"Papa," he said, "you have put up a sail to alleviate the fatigue of the rower; but now you ought to think of yourself, and to devise something which will cause the steering to be accomplished with greater precision and safety."

"The idea is not at all a bad one," I said; and I immediately set

about adjusting to each extremity of the boat two thick pieces of rope, into which I fastened an oar so as to admit of it steering either way.

This work had occupied us for some considerable time, and I now



saw we could not reach the shore before night-fall at least, unless we were to return empty handed. We had arranged with my wife that we would hoist a flag if we intended to remain on board, and we now set about making the signal.

We employed the remainder of the day in emptying the ballast from our boat, and filling it with useful objects. We pillaged the ship like Vandals, and amassed an immense booty. Foreseeing that we should have to live a long time in solitude on that desert island, I gave the preference to the articles which would be most useful; so I made an ample provision of powder and bullets to serve us in hunting, and to defend us from the attacks of wild beasts. All the things which had been put aside as rubbish, now appeared to me to be of inestimable value.

Our ship had been originally freighted for the establishment of a colony in the south, and contained a large assortment of things which are not usually found on board ship. They had embarked a quantity of cattle, but the oxen like the horses had perished in a murrain, and the others had been destroyed. In the midst of so great riches, choice was very difficult. We took knives and forks, spoons, and cooking utensils of which we had great need. In the captain's cabin we found some silver covers, plates, and spoons of pewter, and a hamper filled with excellent wine. We carried all these things into our tubs. From the galley we took roasting jacks, kettles, fryingpans, pots and saucepans, also a quantity of Westphalia hams, sausages, and some sacks of maize and other grain. We did this all the more quickly because the ship being in so precarious a condition, might go to pieces any moment.

Fritz reminded me that our bed on land was very hard; so I went in search of some hammocks and blankets. He, who never could have too many weapons, took another gun, a sword, a barrel of powder, and a hunting knife. To these we added a barrel of sulphur, some matches and some cord, and a roll of canvas. Our little boat was so laden and so deep in the water that I believe, had it not been very calm, it would have been dangerous to have set out. We each furnished ourselves with a cork jacket as a precaution.

Night falls very quickly in these latitudes, and it was no use to think of regaining the land in the dark. A large fire which was burning on the rocks assured us that all was well at home, and we, in our turn, hung up the great ship lanterns to assure them of our safety. Two shots assured us that they had seen the light and understood the signal.

After a fervent prayer to Heaven for protection for us and ours, we sought rest after our fatigues, and we took up our position in our tubs in such a manner as to be ready in case of any alarm.



CHAPTER VI.

"All's Well."—Getting the Cattle Ashore.—A Shark.—A Good Shot.—Safe on Land.
—Jack's Belt.—Hain for Supper.—Omelets and Wine.



HE next morning, even before I could see the coast distinctly, I was up on deck and looking through my telescope in the direction of the tent which contained my dear ones. Meantime Fritz was preparing breakfast for us, as I still kept observing the shore. Very soon I was delighted to see my wife come out of the tent and look anxiously in the direction of the wreck. I immediately put up our signal as agreed, and we received for answer three dips of the flag which we had hoisted on the beach. I felt now free from all anxiety, for I was assured that all had been quiet during the night, and that nothing had happened to disturb those we had left behind us.

"Fritz," I said, "until now I thought that we ought not to lose a moment in quitting the vessel; but as, thank God, I am now assured of the safety of our dear ones, I think that we ought to take measures to deliver the poor animals on board, which are likely to perish at any moment. I very much wish that we could devise some means of getting them ashore."

"Well," said Fritz; "cannot we construct a raft to transport them all?"

"Without mentioning the difficulties of its construction," I replied, "how could we get the cow, the ass, and the sow on such a raft; and if we got them there, how could we keep them quiet? It would be all very well for the sheep and the goats, but that is not sufficient. You have a young head—think; perhaps you will devise something better than I can."

"Let us throw the sow into the water to swim," said Fritz; "her fat and her great size will easily sustain her, and we can tow her afterwards."

"That is all very well as far as the sow is concerned," I replied, "but how about the sheep and the goats, which are not less useful to us."

"Well, then, let us give them swimming jackets," said the boy. "They will swim like fishes, and we shall have something to amuse us besides."

"Very good," I replied. "Your suggestion inspires me with an excellent idea. Come along, let us set to work at once."

We ran to the sheep pen, and selected a sheep, to whose sides we fastened two floats, and threw it into the sea. I saw the poor creature disappear beneath the surface, with a mixture of hope and fear in my mind. It sank deeply, and I thought would never come up again; but it at length rose to the surface, nodded its head in a most lamentable manner, and began to swim at first; but becoming fatigued, it remained quite motionless, and floated without any exertion.

I was delighted. "Now we shall get them all ashore!" I cried. "They are ours; we shall be able to save the whole lot." But I very much wished to get back the sheep for the present.

Fritz wished to throw himself into the sea to recover it. I furnished him also with a float, and he let himself into the water. Taking a cord he threw it round the neck of the sheep, and drew it back towards the opening of the vessel, where it was quite happy again.

I now fastened four casks together and attached them in pairs by a large piece of canvas. This canvas was intended to pass underneath the bellies of the cow and the ass, so that they would each have a cask on each side. We had more trouble with the sow, and it was not till after we had put a string through her nose that we were able to furnish her with a swimming jacket, which was made of cork.

The sheep and the goats gave us less trouble, and very soon we had the whole herd assembled together on the upper deck ready to start. We fastened a cord round the horn or the stomach of each animal, the other end of which rope was attached to a large piece of wood, which permitted us to lead them and to drag them after us when we were in the boat.

Now that we had got everything ready for the transit, we dragged the ass to the bulwarks, and with a hearty shove sent him into the sea. He fell with a great splash and sank quickly, but very soon came to the surface, and swam between his two casks in a manner which called forth our warmest approbation. It was now the cow's turn, and as she was of much more importance to us than the ass, I was more anxious on her account. When the ass had got some little distance away, we launched her with the same success, and she began to swim to land with all the coolness which characterizes her species. We treated the sheep in the same manner, and nothing was left now but the sow, which gave us a great deal of trouble. At length she was floated like the

others, and beating the water soon got away from the boat, and was the first to reach the shore.



"HE SWAM TOWARDS THE SHEEP."

We did not lose a moment, but jumped into our boat, and cut the cables. We were soon right in the midst of our herd. We picked up

all the cords without difficulty and attached them to the stern of the boat, and dragged the whole flock in the direction of the land impelled by a favourable breeze which inflated our sail.

In fact, the assistance rendered by the sail was by no means superfluous, for the animals were a great drag upon our crank boat, and we should never have been able to reach the shore by rowing merely. They all followed us in order, and whenever our boat inclined too much on one side, our outrigger prevented it from being overturned. At the end of a quarter of an hour we had made considerable progress.

Proud of our success, and charmed at the rapidity at which we sailed we sat down upon the cargo and took some refreshments; Fritz afterwards amused himself teasing the ape, while I kept looking towards the shore in the hope of seeing my family. I had remarked from the deck of the vessel that they had made a little excursion inland, but since then I had not observed any traces of them.

But all our precautions for saving our herd would have proved futile if Fritz's keen eye had not fortunately discovered a threatening danger.

All of a sudden he cried out, "Good gracious, we are lost! An enormous fish is coming to attack us."

"What do you mean by lost!" I said, half angry and half terrified. "Be ready, and so soon as he approaches, let us fire at him."

We seized our guns, loaded each with two bullets, and prepared to receive the enemy. He approached us from the stern of the boat, and swam at a tremendous speed towards an unfortunate sheep. At that moment Fritz fired, and with such good aim that the bullets struck the monster in the head. He dived immediately, and disappeared. From time to time he came again to the surface, and displayed the shining scales of his belly; but a long trace of blood was visible, the result of Fritz's successful shot. Meantime I carefully looked round with the telescope to ascertain if he were likely to repeat his attack.

"He has had enough of it," said Fritz.

"You have been very fortunate," said I; "for such an animal is not very easily frightened, and is very difficult to wound with fire-arms. I believe it was a shark; and that voracious fish only comes too readily when there is anything to be got."

I directed Fritz to re-load his gun to be ready for any emergency, and I redoubled my vigilance, for I did not think it likely that the shark was alone. Fortunately my fears were without foundation, and we were left in peace.

I now resumed my steering, and as the wind carried us directly to the little bay, we entered it without difficulty, lowered the sail, and, after a few turns, I reached a spot whence our animals could easily get ashore. I then cut the cords, the beasts gladly leaped on land, and in a few moments our little boat was moored in its former position.

None of our family made their appearance, however, and I began to feel somewhat nervous ; for night was approaching, and I did not know in what direction to seek for them. But we had not long been on shore when a joyful cry reached my ears, and we saw the little band running towards us, my wife bringing up the rear.

After the first transports of joy had subsided, I gave them a detailed account of our expedition. My wife could scarcely comprehend how it was that we had managed to save the cattle.

I said I had addled my brains to devise some means for their transport, and had not succeeded.

"Yes," said Fritz ; "this time my advice prevailed."

"That is quite true," I added ; "it was his suggestion, and we have to thank him for it."

My wife was of opinion that we both deserved thanks, for we had



THE SHARK.

saved what were to us the most necessary things. Frank was delighted to see the little red flag which fluttered at our mast. Ernest and the others jumped into the boat, and admired the mast, the sail, and the flag, and insisted on our explaining how we had managed to do so much. Jack, who did not care so much about the workmanship, glided away along the coast towards the cattle, and took off the swimming jackets from the sheep and the goats, and went into fits of laughter at the efforts of the donkey to rid himself of his two casks, and tried to assist him ; but not being able to succeed, he jumped upon his back and rode towards us in great state, kicking and beating the animal to make him go faster. We could not help laughing at the singular appearance they presented ; and I was very much astonished when I helped Jack to dismount, to find him girt with a belt of yellow skin, into which he had thrust a pair of pistols.

"Where on earth," said I, "did you pick up this bandit's costume?"

"I made it myself," he replied; "and look at the dogs."

I now remarked for the first time that each of the dogs wore a collar of a similar make, ornamented with a quantity of nails, which formed a good defence for their throats.

"That is capital," I said; "and so you have invented and perfected all this?"

"Yes," said Jack; "it was I. Mamma only helped me with the sewing."

His mother confirmed the assertion, and told me that she had taken care to bring ashore her needles and thread. Fritz was somewhat annoyed to see that Jack had skinned his jackal and cut his beautiful hide in pieces; but he smothered his resentment as well as he could, yet whenever he came near Jack he took the opportunity to say,—

"Where can that horrible smell come from? Something must have happened to our cavalier here."

"What could have happened?" said Jack. "You are always so ready to joke. What could it be, but the smell of your jackal, which has been exposed to the sun all this time, and is beginning to get offensive?"

"That is very likely, Fritz," I said; "and in any case we must not leave it where it is, for it will very soon breed fever."

"But those who took his skin from him ought to take him away," said Fritz.

"No doubt," I replied; "but Jack has done the best thing he could. And who knows if you would have had time to employ yourself so usefully. Meantime, let us get rid of the carcase."

"But it is really Jack who smells so unpleasantly," said Fritz.

"Well, it may possibly be the belt which smells," said Jack; "but it will lose that odour when it gets dry."

"We must not be too delicate," I said. "Let Jack keep to leeward at present, and we shall not perceive it."

This remark made all the boys laugh, and they all cried out, "Keep to leeward, Jack; keep to leeward."

But Jack cared very little for their delicate nerves, and walked up and down before us with quite a martial air, which was very amusing. Finally we resolved to throw the remainder of the jackal into the sea.

As I now perceived that no preparation had been made for supper, I directed Fritz to bring the Westphalia ham which was in one of our tubs. The whole party looked at me in astonishment, but Fritz very quickly appeared with the ham.

"How splendid!" they cried. "A ham! a ham! And how good it looks."

"Ah," said my wife, "if you get no supper until that ham is cooked—

you will have to wait some time ; but look here, I have got a dozen tortoise eggs which I picked up on our excursion. I could very soon make an omelet with them ; for, thank goodness, we have plenty of butter."

"The eggs of the tortoise," said Ernest, who was always ready to air his knowledge, "are easily recognised by their roundness ; they are as soft to the touch as damp parchment. We found them buried in the sand close to the sea."

"You are quite right, my dear Ernest," I said ; "but how did you make the discovery ?"

"Oh, that belongs to the history of our expedition," replied my wife ; "and when you have time to listen, I will tell you all about it. But just now I think we had better see about supper."

"All right," I said, "so be it. Go and cook your omelet, and after supper we will listen to the story of your exploits. That will be our dessert. As for our ham, I can assure you it is very nice raw, as we have already had experience on board ship ; but I have no doubt it will be better cooked. Meanwhile, as you are cooking supper, I will go and set free the cow, the ass, and the pig from their attachments, and the children had better come and help me."

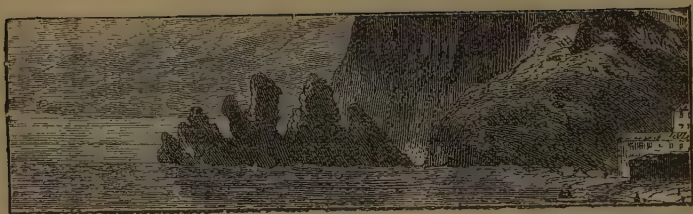
I got up as I spoke ; the boys all accompanied me to the sea-shore, and the work did not take long. The pig was the only one which was restive, and would not allow itself to be approached by any of us. But Ernest was equal to the occasion ; instead of tiring ourselves, he sent the dogs after her, and in a very few moments they had seized her firmly by each ear, and compelled her to halt, squeaking dreadfully. We then released her from the casks, like the others, and returned to the tent.

My wife had now made the omelet, and was waiting for us.

Furnished with spoons, forks, plates, and all the accessories, we made an excellent repast : ham, cheese, biscuits, and a capital omelet made quite a feast. The dogs, the fowls, pigeons, sheep, and goats assembled round us to pick up the fragments we left ; as for the geese and ducks, though they were close by, they would not associate with us,—they preferred the pleasures of a small pool of water at no great distance, in which they found worms and a species of small crab.


We had a very merry supper, and at its conclusion I desired Fritz to fetch a bottle of canary wine which we had found in the captain's cabin, and then I invited my wife to tell us her adventures.





CHAPTER VII.

My Wife's Narrative.—The Expedition.—The Bustard.—The Great Trees.—Along Shore.—Turtle's Eggs.—A Proposal to Live in the Tree.

 HIS morning, after I had seen your signal, and had answered it, I looked out, before the children were up, for a quiet and shady place in which to pass the day ; for close to our tent we were much exposed to the sun's rays, and the great heat was very oppressive to me.

"It is quite impossible, I thought, to remain in this place long. The sun beats down upon us directly all day, and we have no means of escaping from it, but in the very insufficient shelter of a badly constructed tent, in which the heat is even more insupportable. So while my husband and son are away getting provisions from the wreck I will go with the younger ones and see if we cannot find a more agreeable place of residence. By so doing we shall gain strength and courage for the future, and if instead of this arid and naked spot we can find a comfortable and shady corner ; or in the woods, of which they gave me such a pleasant account, we shall perhaps be able to put up with our position more readily.

"So we took our arms with us, and set out, accompanied by the two dogs, in the direction of the river. Turk, who had already made an expedition with you, appeared to think that we were going in the same direction, and he served as a guide. We very soon reached the place where you had crossed the river ; and we succeeded in getting to the opposite bank, though not without difficulty.

"While we were preparing to cross, I reflected that our safety now depended in a great measure upon the two lads, because they alone had some little knowledge of fire-arms ; and I was very glad indeed, I assure you, that you had early accustomed them to the use of guns, though at the time, you know, I objected strongly to their being taught.

"Ernest passed in safety over the river first of all. I then took little



THE BUSTARD.

Frank upon my back, and we were soon upon the other side. Jack leaped in courageously, and soon rejoined us.

"As soon as I had filled my flask with water we resumed our march; and when we had reached the high ground, we were surprised and delighted, as you were, with the beauty of the country and scenery, and for the first time for many days hope entered into my breast.

"We very soon entered a shady and verdant valley. I made up my mind to reach a small wood, which I saw at some distance, and I attempted to get there in a straight line, but we were obliged to traverse some meadow land in which the grass and reeds grew so high as to overtop the children's heads, and it was with very great difficulty we could proceed.

"Jack at last found a way a little towards the sea on the left, along which we proceeded without any trouble. We recognised your track of the preceding day, and followed its many turnings and windings to the little wood I have mentioned. There we quitted the sea-shore and struck inland to the right.

"All of a sudden we heard a great whirring noise, and a large bird rose out of the grass almost at our feet. Both the boys brought their guns to their shoulders, but before they could fire the bird was out of range.

"'Oh, what a pity,' said Ernest as he recovered his gun, 'that I had not my own little rifle. If I had, that bird would not have escaped so easily. As it was, if he had not flown so quickly I could have hit him.'

"'Oh, yes,' I said, 'no doubt. You would be a capital shot if the bird could give you a quarter of an hour's notice before his departure.'

"'But how could I tell it was going to get up so close to us?' said he.

"'It is just these very surprises which make flying shots so difficult; and it is necessary, if you wish to succeed, not only to have quick sight, but great presence of mind.'

"'Perhaps it was an eagle,' suggested Jack.

"'No doubt it was an eagle,' said Frank; 'for he had such tremendously long wings.'

"'That proves nothing,' said Ernest; 'all birds with large wings are not eagles.'

"'I suspect,' said I, 'that we disturbed it from its nest. Let us look for it, and perhaps we may be able to decide what bird it was.'

"Jack hurriedly made off in the direction of the place where the bird had risen, but at that very moment a precisely similar one flew out, almost touching, as he flew past, the face of the boy, who stood completely taken by surprise.

"The bird escaped uttering loud cries.

"The other children, not less astonished, were quite unable to take aim before it disappeared.

"'What unskilful hunters you are,' I said. 'Is it possible that you

profited so little by what has just occurred. I can see very well that you require some more instruction from your father.'

"Ernest was very much vexed; but Jack, taking off his hat, and making a comical bow to the fugitive, which was now nothing but a speck on the horizon, said, 'I hope we shall meet again another time. Meanwhile, I am your most obedient servant.'

"Ernest soon discovered the nest of which we were in search. It was very rudely constructed of dried grass, and only contained a few broken egg-shells. From this fact I was of opinion that the young birds had only quite lately quitted it; and by the movement of the herbage at a little distance, I believe they fled there, but it was not possible for us to follow them, as these indications of their presence were very soon obliterated.

"Now, Frank,' said Ernest, 'could those birds be eagles? Eagles never make their nests upon the ground, and besides their young cannot run about immediately after emerging from the shells. It is just the opposite with domestic fowls and other birds of the same race. So I am of opinion that the birds which we have found in the nests are bustards, in consequence of the dark greyish colour of their plumage, the brownish stripe on the wings, and particularly from the moustache-like feathers at the corner of the beak of the first bird, which I take to be the male.'

"If instead of examining them so critically,' I said to the little *savant*, who seemed a little proud of his display of knowledge, 'you would take better aim, you would have had a much better chance of verifying your observations; though in that case,' I added, 'you would have deprived the younger ones of their parents; so it is better as it is, after all.'

"Talking thus we arrived near the little wood, towards which we directed our steps. Quite a crowd of unknown birds were darting amongst the trees, and warbled in a most varied concert as they flew about us without any symptom of fear.

"The boys were delighted and were already preparing to shoot some, but I prevented them; pointing out that the great height of the trees would probably render their shots harmless.

"But what trees they were! I really cannot trust myself to give you a description. You never saw anything like them in your life. What had appeared to us at a distance a small wood was only a group of ten or twelve trees, and of such an enormous size! What was most astonishing about them was that they appeared to grow in the air, in the form of flying buttresses. Enormous roots had as it were, lifted the tree out of the ground and supported it above the soil, nevertheless the original roots of the tree hold strongly to the ground, but below the roots it is smaller.

"Jack climbed up one of these roots, and measured the thickness of

the trunk with a piece of string ; it was thirty-four feet in circumference at the narrowest part, and rather higher up it was eighty feet. The height of the tree from the ground to the summit must have been one hundred and fifty feet. The foliage was thick and the branches very extensive and furnished a most agreeable shade. The form of the leaves resembled that of the walnut, but I could not discover any fruit. The grass growing around it is thick and luxurious, the ground is free from briars or bushes, and everything combined to make it a charming place of residence.

"So there I determined to halt and eat our dinner. The provisions were unpacked, the stream furnished us with an excellent beverage, and we felt perfectly refreshed. The dogs, which had been wandering about on the beach, now joined us, and to my great astonishment, not only did they ask for nothing to eat, but they lay down tranquilly at our feet, and were soon asleep.

"I could not drag myself away from the contemplation of this charming locality, and it occurred to me that if we could only take up our abode in one of these trees we should be perfectly safe.

"I looked farther afield, and as I could not discover a more agreeable place ; I resolved to go no farther, but to return to the tent at once, and, if time permitted, to pick up some of the wreckage which had been cast ashore by the waves.

"So we bent our steps along the sea-shore, and did find many things worth picking up, but most of the articles were too heavy for us to carry. I then discovered what had appeased the hunger of the dogs : they had found some crabs in shallow pools, and breaking the shells had devoured them greedily.

"'Look here, boys,' I said ; 'look here, how industrious hunger makes us. We need never have troubled ourselves about the food for the dogs, nor need we fear to be devoured by them, since the sea supplies them with abundant sustenance.'

"'Our dogs devour us !' cried Jack ; 'just let them come,' he said, putting his hand proudly to his pistol.

"'I do not mean to say,' said I, 'that they would have swallowed us alive ; but they would have consumed a great deal of our provisions by force. Besides, my little hero, you may be very thankful you have not got to contend against two large dogs. They would very soon make an end of you, and your pistols too. To hear you talk, one would take you for a little *Gascon*, instead of a brave Swiss boy.'

"'Bill and Turk are a great deal too good to think of eating us, said little Frank ; 'and it is very naughty of Jack to think of shooting them. Mamma, take away the pistols from such a wicked boy.'

"'You be quiet,' said Jack to Frank, as he embraced him. 'I do

not want to do you any harm, nor the dogs either. I only said that in fun, Frank dear."

"We still continued our way home; and now, as we were leaving the beach, I saw Bill scratching in the sand and swallowing something



greedily as he turned it up. Ernest also remarked it, and cried out in great delight,—

"‘Here are turtles’ eggs, mamma.’"

"‘Turtles’ eggs!’ said Frank; ‘then turtles must be hens, I suppose.’"

"The amusement of Jack and Ernest at this question of Frank may

be imagined. When their laughter had subsided, 'Let us profit by this discovery,' I said, 'and save what we can; for the eggs, I believe, are very good to eat.'

"We had some difficulty in dragging Bill away from his meal; but at last we succeeded in saving about a dozen eggs, which we put in our haversack. Just then we happened to be looking out to sea and were very much astonished to see a sailing boat rapidly approach the land.

"I did not know what to make of it. Frank was afraid that savages were coming to kill us; but Ernest said that it was you and Fritz, and he was right. We then hastened home as quickly as possible, and met you, as you know.

"Such have been our adventures. I looked for a residence, and I have found one. I am delighted; and if you wish to please me, let us go to-morrow and set up our habitation under those magnificent trees, where the view is superb and the place itself delightful."

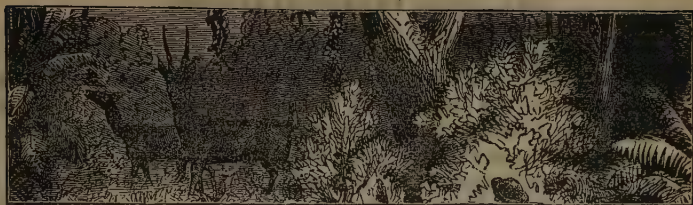
"What, my dear!" I said, laughing, "in the trees, is that all you have discovered for our safety and our residence? I can quite understand that if they are as fine as you say we can find a resting-place in them during the night, but to ascend them we must either have a balloon or wings, and it is not very easy to make either."

"You may laugh as much as you please," said she; "but I am quite sure that amongst the branches of those great trees we could construct a small hut with a ladder leading up to it. Have you not often seen the same thing in Europe? For instance, do you not remember that farmer near our old home, who did much the same thing, and whose hut was called Robinson Crusoe's tree?"

"All right," I replied, "we will think how to set about this difficult work by-and-by."


Meanwhile night had fallen upon us, and this conversation had made us quite forget our usual bedtime. So we assembled to our evening prayer, and retired to bed delighted at being once more united. We slept soundly till aroused by the first rays of the morning sun.





CHAPTER VIII.

A Family Consultation.—Change of Habitation.—Milking *au naturel*.—Another Visit to the Wreck.—The Dead Shark.—Sea Birds.—Crabs.—Planning a Bridge.—A Quiet Night.

“ HAVE reflected upon your project of yesterday,” I said to my wife when I got up in the morning, “and I am of opinion that we ought not to be in too great a hurry to change our residence. In the first place, why should we abandon this spot where Providence has placed us, and which is most suitable for us? On one side we are protected by the sea, on the other by rocks which we can, if necessity arise, abandon for fortified quarters on the banks of the stream, which contains everything necessary for our nourishment, all of which we should have to relinquish if we establish ourselves elsewhere. We can supply our wants from the wreck so long as it is preserved to us. So let us be content where we are for the present; at any rate until we have carried from the ship everything that is likely to be of use to us.”

“What you say is all quite right,” replied my wife; “but I must remind you that the heat here is almost intolerable during a great portion of the day. While you are taking your excursions with Fritz, you are more or less sheltered by trees, which supply you also with some delicious fruits. Here we have no shelter but the tent, under which the heat is intolerable. This makes me anxious concerning the children’s health. We have nothing to eat except the mussels and oysters on the shore, which are not much to our taste; and as for the safety you talk about, it appears to me doubtful. The jackals, as you know, have already found us out, and before long the lions and tigers will likewise discover us. Finally, as to the stores on board ship, I give them up with all my heart, for I am in mortal terror whenever you are away.”

“Well,” said I, embracing her, “you oppose my opinion so warmly that I cannot but yield. Nevertheless I would counsel mutual con-

cession. We will go and live in the little wood, and we will leave our magazine here amongst these rocks. If I can blow down some of the rocks with the powder, I can render the place inaccessible. But the first thing to do, I think, is to construct a bridge over the river, so we can, if we wish, carry our baggage across it."

"Build a bridge!" exclaimed my wife; "why that will take an eternity to accomplish. All we have to do is to take our packs and cross the river on foot. The ass and the cow can carry the heavier articles that may be necessary."

"That they would have to do in any case," I added, "even if the bridge were built; and it will be necessary to provide them with saddles and harness. Now, while you prepare these things, we will construct the bridge, which once it is built will always be useful. Suppose the river were to be flooded in the rainy season, the passage on foot would be impossible."

My wife gave way before these arguments, and we set about our tasks. She begged me to leave the powder in the rocks, because she was afraid of so much of it near us.

In this manner was decided the important question of our change of habitation. The children were awakened and made acquainted with our decision. They were delighted at the prospect, but they did not so warmly enter into the idea of constructing the bridge, for they wished to emigrate immediately into those charming woods, which they had already designated as the "promised land."

After prayers and breakfast, Fritz did not forget his ape, and fed him on goat's milk, for which purpose he allowed the monkey to suck from the goat itself. This appeared a first-rate plan to Jack, who quietly made off, crawled under the cow, and began to help himself from her udder.

"Would you not like to do as I do, Frank?" he cried. "The milk is beautiful."

These words attracted my attention, and we complimented him upon his charming occupation. His brothers, having also noticed him, were prodigal of their quizzing. They christened him *the little calf* upon the spot, and the name stuck to him for months. His mother reproached him for his greediness, and would not even allow him to wait to see the cow milked.

Jack was much ashamed, and defended himself as well as he could. His mother took a jug and milked the cow and goats herself, and gave a cup of milk to each of the children. Some she made into a sort of milk broth, and the remainder she put by for future use.

Meantime I had made our boat ready for another voyage to the wreck to bring back the timber to make the bridge. As soon as

breakfast was over, I embarked with Fritz and Ernest, because I thought by doubling our forces we should accomplish our task with greater rapidity.

We proceeded with great speed as soon as we got into the current, and were rapidly carried out into the bay. But scarcely had we arrived opposite the little islet than we saw a crowd of gulls and other sea birds flying about above a small point of land, which prevented us from seeing the cause of their agitation. They were flying up and down, uttering a chorus of shrill cries enough to deafen one.



Fritz had a great desire to shoot some, and would have done so had not prevented him. I wished to discover what was the cause of all this; so I pulled with all my strength in that direction, and profiting by a slant of wind, we hoisted the sail and ran down very quickly to the spot, which Fritz never lost sight of for a moment.

"Ah, ah!" cried he at last, "I believe that the gulls are devouring great fish without even asking us to share their feast."

We soon found out that there was some reason for their assemblage; for I approached the bank, and anchoring the boat to a large stone we landed to see what was the matter.

We beheld, stretched half in the water and half on the land, the dead body of an enormous fish, on which the birds were feeding; and so busy were they with their repast that not one of them flew away as we approached.

"How on earth could that immense thing have got here! Who could have dragged it on shore?"

"Look, Fritz!" cried Ernest, "that fish, I am certain, is the shark which you shot yesterday. Look at the three bullet holes in its head."

"It is very likely," replied Fritz, "for I put three balls in my rifle, and if well directed he must have received them all."

I confirmed these conjectures, and I made them remark the enormous size of the monster whose teeth we had fortunately escaped. He was at least twenty feet long.

"I should very much like," I said, "to carry away a portion of his skin; and I think if we could get rid of these voracious birds, we could soon cut some off."

Ernest immediately drew his ramrod from the gun, and striking right and left with all his force at those that remained after his first attack. Fritz cut some strips of the skin, in the same way in which Jack had operated on the jackal, and we carried our booty on board the boat.

As we were returning, I remarked at some little distance on the shore of the sand-bank a quantity of planks and spars which had been thrown up by the sea. This discovery would save us the trouble of going on board to fetch them.

We chose those that we thought most suited for our purpose, and made them into a sort of raft. This I attached to our boat, and pulling out to sea we regained the shore impelled by a favourable wind.

I made some experiments in sailing in the current, so as to save us fatigue and to enter the bay without accident. In this I succeeded. The current carried us rapidly into the open sea. I could then hoist up the sail, and going at a good pace without much exertion, I hoped to reach the land and disembark in safety.

While I was thus steering the boat, Fritz, according to my instructions, was occupied in stretching the shark's skin and nailing it upon the deck to dry in the sun, while Ernest examined the birds which he had knocked over with his ramrod.

"Papa," he cried, "what can we do with these birds; are they not good to eat?"

"Not very good, my friend. Gulls feed chiefly upon fish, which gives them a somewhat disagreeable taste. There are many species of them, and the greater part of them are so stupid that they can be easily caught while they are feeding by throwing a net over them, and s

greedy that when they are actually eating they allow themselves to be killed rather than quit their prey."

"Certainly," said Fritz, "if they were not so stupid and so greedy they would not allow themselves to be killed with the ramrod of a gun. But, papa, what is the good of the shark's skin which I have endeavoured to stretch on the mast and deck, and which keeps shrivelling up in spite of all I can do?"

"I know it," I replied; "it must be quite hard before it is of any use. It is with this skin that rasps are made, and that fine leather which they call shagreen. It is necessary for that purpose that it should be smooth and well polished."

At length we entered the bay in safety, I lowered the sail, and we jumped ashore. We could not perceive any of our family in the neighbourhood, but we were not alarmed at their absence, as we should have been the day before. We all called out to them together, and our cry made the rocks re-echo.



THE CRAB.

A voice soon replied, and my wife came running up with the two youngest boys. Each of them carried a handkerchief, which appeared well filled with something or other, and Frank had a fishing net suspended from his shoulder.

When they came near to us they expressed their astonishment at our quick return, and Jack, who could no longer contain himself, opened his handkerchief and shook out a quantity of very fine fresh-water crabs. His mother and Frank followed his example, and the crabs, finding themselves at liberty, began to run about in all directions with such rapidity that the boys had difficulty to recapture them; but they were

much amused, and their joyous laughter and cries were most refreshing to hear.

"Are they not splendid, papa?" said Jack. "There are thousands of them, and we have let go at least two hundred. Look how big they are, and what enormous claws they have got."

"Who discovered this new treasure?" I asked. "It was you, I suppose."

"No, papa," he replied, "it was Frank who made the discovery; but I ran to tell mamma of it, and arrange the net. I went into the water up to my knees, and I caught them by dozens, and now I will tell you how it all happened:—

"While mamma was occupied with her sewing I went down to the river with Fritz's monkey on my shoulder, and followed by Frank, to discover the best place for our bridge. When we reached the river Frank amused himself by throwing stones into the water. Suddenly he came running back. 'Jack, Jack,' he cried, 'come here, and look at the quantity of crabs on Fritz's jackal.' So I went, and saw that the carcase of the jackal, which was in a shallow place, was in fact covered with splendid crabs. I ran to tell mamma; she brought a net, and we took as many as we liked in our hands or in the net, and if you had not called us we could have caught a great number more.

"We have quite enough for to-day to make us a most delicious meal; but you must put the small ones back in the river again. You now see that we have found another store of provisions which will furnish us with many a good dinner. Let us thank God, who has not only given us an abundance, but even a superfluity."

After we had in our turn recounted our adventures, and Ernest had exhibited his sea gulls, my wife proposed to cook some of the crabs while we went to take the raft of planks and spars to pieces and to haul them ashore. But the task was by no means an easy one. We had not the tackle necessary to yoke the animals to the timber, and our united strength was not nearly sufficient to haul up such large masses of wood.

I then recollected the manner in which the Laplanders harness the reindeer to their sledges. To the neck of the ass and to the horns of the cow I attached a long cord, which, passing between their legs, I fastened tightly to the timber. We thus were enabled to transport it piece by piece to the spot which our youthful engineer had selected for the construction of our bridge, and which place we found was really the most suitable. The stream at that spot was rather narrow, the banks were of the same height and firm, while the trunks of the old trees which were growing on each side gave us an excellent leverage on which to fix our spars and to form the base of our bridge.

"It now remains for us to ascertain if the spars are sufficiently long to reach across the river," said I. "It is impossible to measure accurately with the eye, and we have no other means open to us."

"Well," said Ernest, "but mamma has a ball of twine, and all we have to do is to fasten a stone to it, and to throw it on the other side, then, when we have drawn it back to the opposite brink, we shall be able to measure the width of the stream."



"Very good, indeed," I replied; "at any rate it is a much quicker method of measuring than by geometry."

Jack ran to fetch the twine, and following Ernest's suggestion we found the distance from bank to bank was about eighteen feet. But it appeared necessary that the principal timbers of our bridge should overlap each bank by about three feet, so the entire length of such timbers should be twenty-four feet each.

Fortunately we found some which exceeded even this length, and suited our purpose exactly.

Now there remained but one difficulty ; that was, how were we to throw such long and heavy pieces of timber across the stream ?

We were some time considering this, and at length, not being able to hit upon anything definite, we returned to our tent, more especially as dinner was waiting us, and we thought it advisable to talk it over during the meal.

Our excellent housekeeper had prepared a dish of crabs for us in the most appetising manner ; but beyond this she was very anxious to show me the result of her work, namely, two panniers, which had been made for the ass out of some fragments of sail cloth, and fastened with twine. As she had had no needles sufficiently large, she was obliged to do the sewing with a nail, and had succeeded by dint of patience and perseverance in finishing two very respectable-looking sacks.

I congratulated her warmly upon her success, and she seemed quite pleased at the approval bestowed on her efforts.

We finished our repast on this occasion with more than usual rapidity, as we were anxious to get on with our work ; so scarcely was the meal finished than we each of us ran out of the tent and hurried towards the place where our intended bridge was to be built.

My first care was to place a plank behind the trunk of the tree, and to attach it to the trunk at four or five feet above the ground with a rope. I then passed a second cord to the other extremity, and fastened a stone to the end of the cord, and threw it to the opposite bank of the stream.

As I saw no possibility of employing the ass or the cow, I took with me to the other side a pulley, which I fastened to a tree on the bank. I then passed the cord through the pulley and returned to the bank with the cord in my hand. The rest was easy. I attached the cow and the donkey to the end of the cord, drove them away from the brook, and they pulled the heavy plank round the trunk of the tree, raised it by degrees, then it was lowered and fell upon the opposite bank into its proper position.

Jack and Fritz immediately ran across the plank. I was somewhat nervous at their recklessness, but was careful not to warn them too suddenly, for fear they should be frightened and fall.

We were now somewhat exhausted, and evening was approaching. But the most difficult part of our task was achieved. Two other planks were placed alongside the other as closely as possible, and nothing now remained but to nail them together. The bridge would then be completed.

We then returned to our tent leaving the bridge as it was, and partook of our supper, of which we stood in need. After our evening prayer we went once more to bed, and enjoyed the best night's sleep that we had had since we had been on the island.



CHAPTER IX.

Be Cautious.—The Start.—Our Caravan.—The Porcupine.—Arrival at the Great Trees.—The Lynx.—Forbidden Fruit.—Our Supper.



My first care on the following morning was to warn the children not to expose themselves to danger in imprudently crossing the bridge as they had done the previous day.

"We are now about to go," I said, "to an unknown locality, which is naturally less secure than this is. We neither know the country, the animals, nor the human inhabitants that it may contain. It is therefore essential that we should be prudent and always on our guard; and I must request most particularly that, during our march, you all remain together, and that none of you stray or remain behind under any pretext whatever."

After this warning we had prayers. We then proceeded to breakfast, and subsequently prepared for our departure.

My wife came at this moment and somewhat cooled my ardour. "We must not leave our poultry here to-night," she said, "or else they will be lost. I hoped to be able to put Frank upon the donkey, for I know he cannot walk very fast; besides, we must find a place for this enchanted bag of mine, for goodness knows what we may want."

"Ah, ah!" I said to her, "there is no end to your preparations; but I will do my best to satisfy you. However, the less we take with us, the sooner we shall have to return."

We collected our cattle. The donkey and the cow carried the sacks which my wife had made the previous day, in which we placed a number of the most useful things. We did not forget the captain's case of wine and a small supply of butter. I also made ready the bed furniture, our hammocks and cordage. I had fortunately left an empty space on the donkey's back between the panniers, and there I placed little Frank,

who was so seated that the animal would be able to gallop without any danger of the boy falling off.

Meantime the other boys rushed here and there after the fowls and pigeons, without being able to catch any of them. They returned disappointed and empty-handed.

"Just wait a moment," said my wife; "I will show you a way to secure them."

"Well, then, let us see how you can do it; we shall be very glad for you to show us," said the children.

"Look around you, and I will show you whether people who use their intelligence do not succeed more quickly than those who simply depend upon their strength and agility."

As she spoke she called to the hens and pigeons in a friendly manner and threw upon the ground a few handfuls of seed and morsels of biscuit. Very soon all the birds came running in one direction. She then threw the remainder of the seed into the open tent. The fowls and the pigeons all hurried in there after it, and while they were busily engaged feeding she advanced quietly to the side and closed the entry, so they were all caught at once.

"Well, my young hunters," she said; "have I been as good as my word, and have I silenced your incredulity?"

Jack glided into the tent as stealthily as a fox into a farm yard, seized the birds and handed them to us one by one. We tied their legs together, and put them into a basket on the cow's back. We then placed above them the head of a cask, so as to exclude the light and keep them quiet. Over all we stretched a piece of canvas.

All our preparations for departure were completed. We placed in the tent those things most likely to be spoiled by the heat of the sun, and which we were compelled to leave behind us. We carefully closed the opening of the tent, and our little caravan set out.

We were all well armed, and each one carried a game bag filled with provisions or ammunition. Good humour reigned supreme.

Fritz and his mother marched at the head. Then came the cow and the ass with its rider. Following them the goats led by Jack; the monkey came along seated upon the goat from which it derived its nourishment. After him came Ernest with the sheep, and I myself brought up the rear. The dogs ran hither and thither on our flanks, like very active scouts.

The whole caravan advanced slowly in quite a patriarchal manner, and I could not help calling out to Fritz, "This is the way our ancestors must have lived. When one crosses the desert with his wife and children, his flocks and his baggage, one could almost believe himself a semi-patriarch. What do you think, eh?"

Ernest immediately replied, "It appears to me quite right, besides it is something new. They say that entire tribes travel thus in



preference to any other mode of locomotion, and they find it most convenient."

"It is quite true," I said. "The Tartars, the Arabs, and other nations live in this style to the present day, and that is why they are called nomad tribes; but they usually have camels and horses with which they can proceed much more quickly than we can with only a cow and a donkey. So far as I am concerned, I hope this migration will be our last."

My wife replied that our new habitation would be sure to please us so much that we should quite forget the fatigues of the march. "In any case, I will take the blame; for it is I who first suggested the idea of leaving the tent."

"Wherever you wish to go, my dear," I replied, "you may rest assured that we will follow you gladly; for it is quite certain that you have no selfish motives for your conduct."

We arrived comfortably at our bridge. Here we were joined by the pig, which we had found impossible to compel to accompany us at the start, but when it saw us at a distance, came voluntarily to join our cavalcade, though all the time expressing her great disgust by a series of uncompromising grunts.

The passage of the bridge was effected without accident, but when we reached the opposite bank of the river a new difficulty presented itself. The herbage was so fresh and so appetising, that none of the animals could resist the temptation, and strayed right and left to enjoy it.

We should never have been able to get them together again had it not been for our faithful dogs, which barked around them and made believe to bite their legs. By these means they gradually reassembled them, and to avoid a recurrence of this incident, I turned aside to the left hand and skirted the sea beach, where there was no herbage to tempt them to stray.

We had not proceeded very far in this direction, when our dogs darted away into the grass to the right of the track, and began to bark loudly, and to howl as if they were hurt, or contending against some wild beast.

Fritz shouldered his gun and ran immediately in the direction of the sound. Ernest, who was not very brave, contented himself by stopping by his mother, while Jack hurried after his brother with his musket on his shoulder.

For my own part, fearing some danger, I hurried after them both, in readiness to fire on any enemy which might present himself. We all arrived at the place about the same time, and Jack cried out, "O, papa, look what an enormous porcupine. Come quickly!"

I hastened up, and saw that he had not been mistaken, although he had exaggerated somewhat. The dogs with bleeding jaws were leaping around the animal, and whenever they attacked him he rolled himself

up into a ball, uttering a horrible cry, and presenting nothing but a ridge of spikes to his assailants, so that the brave dogs could make no impression upon him.

Without hesitation, Jack drew a pistol from his jackal-skin belt, took aim and shot the porcupine through the head. The animal fell dead upon the spot.

"How very imprudent of you!" exclaimed Fritz, possibly jealous at his brother's prowess. "You might easily have missed your aim, and shot one of us, or perhaps wounded the dogs."



THE PORCUPINE.

"How could I possibly have hurt any of you," said Jack, "when you are all behind me, and the dogs at the side?"

"Poor Fritz," I said, "appeared somewhat disappointed at not having fired the shot himself, and now wishes to find fault with Jack after the manner of the wolf and the lamb. Make yourselves quite easy, my children. Jack has his turn to-day, it will be Fritz's turn to-morrow. It is quite true that Jack was not very prudent, but we must not find fault with his success."

Peace was immediately established. Jack gave a finishing stroke to the porcupine to assure himself of its death, and then they set to work to drag it through the herbage. But they very soon drew back with bleeding hands, and stood looking at each other in a somewhat embarrassed manner. However, Jack very soon devised an expedient. Taking his handkerchief from his pocket, he tied it round the creature's neck and dragged it to the spot where his mother was awaiting us.

"Look here, mother!" he cried, "see what I have killed. Ernest, look; you too, little Frank. I hope it will be very nice. I killed it myself with a single pistol-shot, and papa says it is very good to eat."

His mother warmly congratulated her son upon his courage and skill.

Ernest, who approached, examined the porcupine very attentively with his usual coolness, and remarked that he had two long incisor teeth in each jaw, like those of the hare and squirrel, and short rounded ears, like a man's.

My wife and I meantime busied ourselves in taking the darts from the dogs' muzzles, and in looking to their wounds while the children were left to examine the prey at their leisure.

"Is it really possible," said Jack, somewhat boastfully, "that I have killed a porcupine? Look how it is armed on all sides, and what a splendid crest it has on its head."

But I said to him, "What are you going to do with your game? will you carry it with us or leave it here?"

"Oh! we must take it with us, of course," Jack said; "and I hope you will let us do so."

"Were you not afraid," said I to Jack, "that the porcupine would throw some of its darts at you when you approached it? They say that these animals possess the power to do so."

"Oh," he replied, "I never thought of that; but in any case, I believe it to be only a fable."

"Nevertheless," I replied, "you see that the dogs have been wounded."

"That is true," he said; "but then the dogs threw themselves upon the animal, and if they had kept at a little distance, I am sure they would not have been hurt in the least."

"You are quite right, my boy; and I am glad to see that you know how to defend your opinions. The porcupine has not got the power to throw his darts, only as it has often happened that the animals have lost some of them in an encounter similar to that which has just taken place, there has been very strong evidence in favour of the popular belief."

It was resolved to take the porcupine with us, so I covered him with a thick layer of grass, and then rolled the body in a piece of canvas and fastened it upon the donkey's back.

We then resumed our route. But scarcely had we gone a hundred yards when the donkey commenced to rear, broke away from the hand which led him, uttered such cries and jumped about in such an extraordinary manner that we could not help laughing, notwithstanding the temporary danger to which little Frank was exposed. I signed to the dogs, which quickly followed the donkey, and placing themselves in his path stopped him in his wild career.

"How well we galloped!" exclaimed Frank.

"Yes, my child," I replied; "but you ought to be very thankful that you were not thrown. You might have broken your limbs. But what could have induced our steady-going donkey to behave in such a manner, I wonder?"

As I could not understand the cause, I examined him to see if his head was not hurt, and I saw at once that two long spikes of the porcupine had pierced the triple covering which I had placed upon the body, and penetrated the poor beast's flesh. This misfortune was soon repaired. I put the porcupine into my wife's "enchanted" sack, and then stretched a double covering over it. Upon this saddle I told little Frank to support himself, and we proceeded on our way.

Fritz marched at the head with his gun ready cocked, hoping that as he had been so unfortunate in the matter of the porcupine that he would be lucky enough to encounter some of the bustards, of which his mother had given such a lively account. The rest of us followed quietly, and in a short time we reached the promised land without any further adventure.

"My gracious, what splendid trees!" cried Ernest, "and what a height they are."

"In fact," I said, "I had no idea they were so big as this. I confess, my dear wife, that this is a beautiful spot. Supposing that we shall be able to climb one of these trees and reside there, we shall certainly be quite safe from all wild animals, for I defy even a bear to get up to such a height on such a smooth trunk."

We then commenced to unpack. For fear that our animals should stray away, we tied their legs together with a cord, with the exception of the pig. As for the pigeons and poultry, we gave them their liberty. The former immediately roosted in the branches while the poultry began to peck all around us.

We stretched ourselves upon the grass to concert as to the means for our lodgment. It was most desirable to devise some means for protecting ourselves against the cold of the night, and from the attacks of wild beasts, to which we were liable in our open and exposed situation.

It was therefore necessary to attempt to make our dwelling-place in

the tree ; and while I consulted on this point with my wife, Fritz got up and disappeared.

Almost immediately we heard the report of his gun, and very soon afterwards a second shot behind us.

"He is hit ! he is hit !" cried the young hunter.

In a few seconds he reappeared carrying an enormous lynx by the hind legs, and turned the animal round for our inspection.

"Bravo ! my young sportsman," I cried. "You have rendered a great



THE LYNX.

service to our pigeons and poultry. That fellow would have robbed us of some of them to-night. Take care there is not another in the vicinity. These animals very rarely live singly. They must be hunted to death unsparingly if we wish to keep our farm-yard intact.

Fritz asked me to keep the hide for him, and to make something useful out of it.

I recommended him to skin it himself, and to take great care not to damage the stripes, adding that if he took these precautions the skin would be useful to us.

We had not hitherto had any want of furs, as we had been well sup-

plied with canvas ; but he could make a girdle for himself similar to Jack's, and the remainder would serve to make cases for the knives, forks and spoons.

Jack wanted to know what he could make of the skin of his porcupine, and it was decided that its skin should be used in a similar manner, and in making a sort of armour for the dogs to defend them against wild beasts. Jack was delighted at the idea, which gained universal approval.

Immediately each commenced to skin his prey without injury to the skin, both of them showing great ardour. Meantime Ernest was employed preparing a fire-place, while Frank collected dry branches for fire-wood.

Ernest had soon finished his task, and we occupied ourselves putting stones in order for the grate.

"What are those trees called?" he said to me, as we were thus employed. "Are they not enormous walnut-trees? their leaves look like them."

"Trees which have similar leaves," I replied, "are not necessarily of the same species ; and besides, I can perceive a very remarkable difference, for these leaves are paler above and much whiter underneath than the walnut-tree leaves. Besides, I remember that the mangoes and wild fig-trees cross each other in this manner, and are supported by these sort of flying buttresses, and grow to an enormous height."

"I believe," said Ernest, "that mangoes grow on the sea-shore in marshy soil."

"You are partly right, my boy," I said ; "but what you say applies to the black mango, not to the grey or red species, which bear small berries and do not grow so high."

While we were thus discoursing, Frank, who had disappeared for an instant, returned with his mouth full, and said to his mother, "look what a nice thing I have found, it is really excellent."

His mother scolded him for eating fruit that he did not know, saying he might have poisoned himself ; but on examination she found that they were figs.

Frank now informed us that he had found them in the grass, and there were thousands of them—that they could not be poisonous, because the poultry, pigeons, and the pig, were all eating them. So we were now assured that the trees were fig-trees.

Although Frank's imprudence had no unpleasant consequences, I took the opportunity to warn the children on no account ever to partake of any fruit with which they were unacquainted, adding, that as a rule they might, without danger, eat such fruits as the birds and the monkey devoured.

Ernest remarked that the cocoa nuts were quite wholesome, yet ~~no~~ bird would eat them.

"That is accounted for," I replied, "by the thickness of the shell, and by their size; but, besides, I only wish to give you a general rule, which of course must have its exceptions."

The other boys surrounded Frank, and begged him to give them some of the figs that remained. They then went up to the ape, which, perched upon a root, had been attentively regarding all that had taken place. They presented him with some figs; he smelt them in a most comical way, and finally devoured them with most laughable contortions of visage. The children were delighted, and applauded him loudly. Meantime, our housekeeper had lighted the fire and prepared our dinner.

Fritz had almost succeeded in skinning the lynx, and seeing that Jack was somewhat embarrassed with his task, he went to his assistance.

When the two skins had been taken off, the carcase of the lynx was given to the dogs, who very soon devoured it; but the porcupine was cut up in pieces and cooked, some in a saucepan and some on a spit.

As the dinner was not quite ready, I amused myself by converting some of the quills of the porcupine into needles. Making a nail red hot I drove it through the head of each quill, and thus, in a short time, I succeeded in turning out a packet of needles, which gave a pleasant surprise to my wife. I then recollected that we had no means of ascending the tree, and I resolved to make a rope ladder also; but as there were so many things to be done, I postponed that for another occasion.

While dinner was preparing, I built up stones at the foot of the tree that I had selected for our habitation, and we attempted to climb up upon the roots, but in vain—we were too little accustomed to climbing to succeed, so we despaired of establishing our residence in the tree for that day. My wife now announced that dinner was ready. We found an excellent biscuit soup, and porcupine flesh, which was a little hard, and of which my wife did not partake; she contented herself with ham and cheese. As for the rest of us, we found the exercise had given appetites, and we made no difficulty about eating the porcupine.





CHAPTER X.

Préparations for the Night.—Flamingoes.—Bows and Arrows.—Measuring the Tree.—Making a Ladder.—Ascent of the Tree.—Sleeping in Hammocks.



WHEN supper was over, I said to my wife, "We must make up our minds to sleep to-night on the ground for once, for I do not see how we are to establish ourselves in the tree this evening. Meanwhile, do you occupy yourself in getting the harness ready for the ass and the cow, so that they may be useful to transport the wood and the planks which will be necessary for the construction of our house."

My good wife immediately set about the task with the needles which I had made; while I, on my part, employed myself in slinging our hammocks, so that in any case we should have a shelter for that night from the dew and the insects.

It was not so easy to attach the hammocks to the arched roots, and I suspended over all a large piece of canvas as a roof.

When these preparations were completed, I made haste, so as to profit by the short twilight, and in company with Fritz and Ernest sought on the shore for the necessary timber to make the ladder which we should require. There were a great many dry branches under the fig-tree which I at first thought would serve our purpose; but they were too old, and not to be depended upon, and there was no greener wood in the vicinity which we could use.

The beach was strewn with wreckage, it is true, but we had not sufficient time to pick and choose, and we should have been in a fix if Ernest, to my great delight, had not discovered a bundle of bamboos half buried in the sand. We quickly disinterred them, and with the boys' assistance they were soon cleaned. I then tested them, and found them so strong and solid that I was sure they would answer our purpose, so I cut them into lengths of about four or five feet, and bound

them into three bundles suitable for each one to carry. I then selected a few reeds which we found at some little distance inland, to serve for arrows, according to an idea I had conceived. Not far off was a little grove of canes which appeared to me likely to be useful, so thither we directed our steps.

According to our usual custom, we had our guns all ready, and as Bill had accompanied us to the beach, we made him go in front of us, and we followed cautiously.

But scarcely had we advanced more than a few paces, than Bill dashed suddenly into the thicket and "flushed" a flock of superb flamingoes, which rose in the air rapidly. Fritz, who was always on the alert, now fired immediately, and hit two of them. One fell dead on the spot, but the other was only crippled in the wing, and began to run away at such a pace on his long legs that it would have been almost impossible to catch him. Fritz, in his excitement, hurried up to the dead one, and sank up to his knees in the marsh. Warned by his example, I took a more circuitous route after the wounded bird. Fortunately, as Bill was with us I could put him on the track of the flamingo, else I should never have recovered it. The dog raced after it through the wood, and caught the flamingo by the wing, and held him till I came up. Meanwhile, Ernest was quietly sitting at the edge of the marsh awaiting our return.

A cry of victory went up through the wood.

"I have got him, I have got him!" I cried.

"So have I," was the reply, "a splendid bird!"

Fritz was soon out of the marsh, and I rejoined him after a time.

When I captured the flamingo, I was obliged to tie his feet with my handkerchief, so that he should not trouble us on our way back. Nevertheless he was by no means an easy burden to transport; so I put him under my left arm, and with my gun in my right hand I made my way back to my sons. But still it was very necessary for me to retain my presence of mind, for I was some distance away across the marsh, and it was by no means easy to return.

The children's joy knew no bounds when they saw me return with the live flamingo.

"Is it much hurt?" they cried. "Can we carry it home? Can we keep it tied up? Will it live with the fowls?"

"I do not know whether it is much hurt," I said; "but if it can get well, it will do so very quickly, and as I know that flamingoes are easily tamed, we will try to tame this one. As to its living with the fowls, that is out of the question; for these birds only live upon fish and insects, which we should have much trouble to procure for it."

Ernest said there were a great many small fish and water snails, etc.,



THE FLAMINGO.

in the little brook close by, and if the flamingo liked food of that sort Jack could get some for him in abundance.

"In that case," I said, "our long-legged friend will do very well; meanwhile let us give it some biscuit soaked in milk, if it remain alive."

"What fun it will be," said Fritz, "if we can rear a number of these magnificent birds, and how nice if we can also capture a few bustards. But look here," he added, "the flamingo has webbed feet like the goose, and long legs like the ostrich. That is an extraordinary thing."

"By no means, my friend," I replied; "other birds have similar attributes."

"But have all flamingoes such brilliant red plumage as this one?" asked Fritz. "I fancied I noticed amongst them some of a different colour. Were they flamingoes also?"

"Yes," I replied, "they were probably young birds of the same species. If I do not mistake, the young flamingoes are white at a certain stage, and it is not until they have attained their full growth that they develop this brilliant plumage."

When we had tied up all our baggage, I gave Ernest the two great canes and the packet of arrows to carry. Fritz took the dead flamingo and I the live one, but scarcely had we advanced fifty paces, when Fritz said to Bill,—

"Come here, sir; you are such a good runner, perhaps you can help us to carry something. That brave Turk carried the monkey very well the other day. Now it is only right that you should save me the trouble of carrying this flamingo." As he spoke, he fastened the bird round the dog's neck. Bill bore his burden with exemplary patience.

"But, my boy," said I, "do you think it right that your father should have the trouble of carrying his load, when you, an able-bodied youth, impress Bill to perform a service to which I have at least an equal claim?"

Fritz made no reply to this observation, except to relieve me of my flamingo, and we reached the spot where the packet of bamboos had been left on the beach. As my son appeared to have enough to carry, I bound the canes together, and took them on my shoulder.

"Now," said I to Fritz, "you see what your obliging conduct has done for you. If you had not so quickly relieved me of my flamingo, you would had to have carried all this bundle of canes yourself, and there is a very considerable difference in the weight of the two loads. So you may take it for granted, that kindness and courtesy will sooner or later be rewarded."

After this we soon arrived at our camping place, and were received by all the family with the greatest demonstrations of affection—they were most particularly delighted to see the flamingo. My wife only did not share in the general joy, for she remarked that it was only one

mouth the more to feed, and we already had enough to provide for.

But this observation did not prevent me from examining the wound of the poor animal. I found that one of its wings was hurt at the extremity by the shot, while the other had been wounded by Bill's teeth; so I had to consider the best means of healing them. However, I cut away the wounded portion with our great scissors, and when the blood flowed I rubbed it with a sort of ointment made of butter, salt, and wine, after having cauterized it. I then attached a heavy stone to its foot with a string sufficiently long to enable it to get as far as the stream. I then left it to its fate.

Meantime, the children had been endeavouring to measure the height of the tree with the two canes tied together; but they scarcely reached the place where the roots formed a buttress with the trunk. They were still sceptical as to the success of my plan, but were nevertheless very anxious to see me set about it.

I cut one of the canes into a piece a little less than the average height of a man, and planted it firmly in the ground, so that the top of the cane came on a level with my eye. The second cane, which was double the length, was planted between the first portion and the tree, and very soon, by means of a cord, I formed a triangle, which enabled me to make a mathematical calculation.

"Thank goodness," I said, "our work is finished. I have ascertained the height of the tree."

"How can you have done that, papa?" cried the children. "No one has ascended it."

Fritz, who had not at first understood what I was about, now recalled the principles of geometry which he had learnt in Europe, and said with a thoughtful air:—

"I believe that the height of the tree is equal to the length of the second thread which is attached to the trunk."

"Quite right," I replied; "and you can explain to your brothers, when you have time, the principles on which your calculation rests."

"Well, but after all," said Jack, "we do not know now what the height of the lower branches is from the ground."

"But we can find out," I replied, "if you will graciously afford your assistance; so if you will have the kindness to ascertain with my yard measure the length of the cord which is attached to the second cane, we shall know."

"That is very curious," said Jack.

"Look here then. There are forty feet exactly, and so after all I have measured the height of the tree, and it is higher than I could have believed possible."

It was now necessary to ascertain whether we had a rope eighty feet long, so as to make the ladder by which we could climb the tree. I directed Fritz and Ernest to measure all we had, and told Jack and Frank to tie together all the pieces of string which had formed our triangle, while I sat down and hastily constructed a bow with one of the bamboos, and half a dozen arrows with one of the canes. As they were too light, I filled them with a little wet sand, and having attached a few flamingo feathers to the lower end of the shafts, so that they might not be diverted from their course, I perceived with satisfaction that they would answer my purpose.

Scarcely had I finished my work when all the young people came jumping round, exclaiming joyfully, "A bow, a bow and arrows! What are you going to do, papa? Oh, let me shoot, and I also, and I."

"Patience, patience, my dear boys," I said, "one moment; I must take the lead this time, because I have made the bow; and it is not for amusement sake, but for immediate use."

I asked my wife if she had a reel of cotton she could lend me, and in searching her "enchanted" bag, she found the very thing I required.

Then Fritz came to inform me that he had measured our supply of rope, and that all together it amounted to two hundred and eighty feet in length, which was more than we required.

I took an arrow and fastened a thread to the lower end, then fixing the arrow on the string I let it go as an experiment at first, and then I shot it right over a large branch of our tree, so that it fell on the other side, while the thread was carried close to us. By these means we were enabled to pass a rope over the same branch, and I could then measure the exact height of that limb from the ground. I found it was exactly forty feet, as we had previously calculated.

After this first success, we all began to work hard to make the ladder. I first cut about a hundred feet of the rope I had prepared, then I divided it into two equal parts. I then stretched these two portions lengthways on the ground at about six inches distance from each other. Fritz cut the bamboos into pieces of about two feet long. Ernest handed them to me as I required them, and I attached them firmly to the two ropes, and when the knots were securely fastened, Jack drove a nail into each end to prevent them coming undone. So in a very short time our forty-foot ladder was made ready for use, to my wife's great astonishment.

We then securely fastened our *chef d'œuvre* to the end of the cord we had passed over the branch, and pulled it up at once, so that the ladder was soon fastened to the tree amidst the congratulations of the whole family.

It was now a question who should mount first. I chose Jack as the

most active, because I was not quite certain as to the stability of our ladder, and I thought that Jack ran less risk of hurting himself than the others did.

The little fellow ran up as nimbly as a cat, and was in the tree in the



twinkling of an eye. I was then certain that Fritz himself could mount without risk. However, I recommended him to ascend cautiously, and to support himself as much as possible by hands and feet at the same time, so that the weight of his body should not come on any one step.

I then furnished him with two long nails and a hammer to fasten the ladder to the branch more securely, while we at the same time attached the lower extremity to a root below to prevent it swinging about.

When he had successfully accomplished his ascent, he fixed the ladder so firmly that I resolved myself to ascend in order to arrange it finally, as was necessary.

I succeeded as well as my son had done, and called to my wife to send me up the pulley by means of the rope. I attached it to the highest branch I could reach, so that the following day we should have everything ready to hoist up the planks and beams which we wanted. This work was finished by moonlight and was the last thing we did that day, which had been the most laborious since we had been wrecked. I then descended to the ground satisfied with our success and quite confident in the future.

Suddenly I noticed that Jack and Fritz had disappeared, and I began to feel anxious about them; but in a few seconds I heard an evening hymn resounding from the summit of the tree, and was now assured that while I had been working on the lower branches they had climbed up to the top. This discovery relieved me of a great weight, and I called to them to come down to assist me in bringing home the animals and in collecting a good store of wood to make a fire to protect us against the attacks of jackals should any be in the neighbourhood.

When we were all once more assembled, Frank observed that the fresh air was very agreeable such a hot day, and that it was a pity to roast ourselves all night with a great fire. I smiled at this, and assured my children that a good fire was the best protection against wild beasts, as even the savage tribes of Africa knew very well.

My wife showed me the work she had finished during the day, namely traces and harness for the ass and the cow. I was now certain that on the following day we should be able to take up our abode in the tree, and that a very little more would be required before we found ourselves in perfect security.

But our good manager had not forgotten to provide something to eat all this time, and Ernest had assisted her in the cooking. Our supper consisted of a large piece of porcupine flesh roasted, and another piece boiled, which yielded a most appetizing odour.

Our cattle were now collected round us, feeding as usual, and it was with great pleasure that we noticed the pigeons had perched upon the highest branches of the trees, while the fowls were roosting on the steps of our ladder.

We tethered the beasts to the roots of the fig tree, and quite close to our hammocks. Meantime the flamingo had not been forgotten; for we gave it some milk, and placed it afterwards comfortably on a root, when

It put its head under its right wing, held its right foot up under its body, and in that position went fast asleep.

At last the desired supper hour arrived. While my wife was serving it up, we had collected a quantity of wood which we placed in a circle round the tree, for I was determined to light the fire immediately, and as I made up my mind not to go to sleep, I wished to be able to keep it up during the night, to frighten the wild beasts. Now all our precautions for safety were complete; and when my wife called out to us that supper was ready, we lost no time in obeying the summons. The children did full justice to the porcupine, but my wife could not yet bring herself to taste it. I scolded her a little for setting the children such an example of daintiness; but it was of no use, she preferred to sup upon bread and cheese.

For dessert the children had plenty of figs, which they had collected during the day, and which were excellent eating. But after a short time sleep seized upon all, and, with brief prayer, they sought their hammocks. I did the same after I had lighted the fire and gone my rounds, but when I came near the hammocks I heard nothing but groaning and complaint.

"This is horrible!" they all cried. "It is just as if we were tied up in sacks! we cannot move hand nor foot. Not even a finger!"

I began to laugh at them, and showed them the way to sleep comfortably in a hammock.

"Balance yourself properly," I said; "lie on one side, wrap your coverlid round you, and you will very soon be asleep. That is the way sailors sleep, and I should think young Swiss lads can manage equally well."

After a few attempts, and some more complaining, all were at length silent. In a short time I was the only one awake.





CHAPTER XI.

Night in the Tree.—Preparations for our Home in the Banyan.—Our First Sunday on the Island.—Our Animals.—A Day of Rest.—A Moral Tale.—The Kingdom of Reality and Light.—The Bible Safe.—Our Amusements.—Shooting the

Vicious.



WAS very restless during the first part of the night; it did not appear to me that we were in a very secure position, and the least noise, the falling of the leaves, the rustling of the trees, alarmed me. From time to time, as I noticed that the fire was getting low, I rose to replenish it. At first I got down without any difficulty, but after midnight it appeared less easy for me to leave my hammock, and I contented myself by looking around to see that all was in order. At length towards morning sleep asserted herself, and I sank into profound repose.

It was broad daylight when I awoke. All the rest of the family had already descended. I called to them and we had prayers together. We then breakfasted and resumed our tasks of the previous day.

My wife having milked the cow and looked after some details of the "household," went down to the beach, attended by Ernest, Jack, Frank, and the donkey, to seek for the timber and planks necessary for the building of our house.

Meantime I ascended into the tree with Fritz and took all the dimensions necessary to build us a commodious residence.

Everything turned out as well as I could have anticipated; the branches were sufficiently thick and close together, the strongest extended almost at right angles from the trunk. I cut those which I thought likely to interfere in any way with my proposed residence, and retained the lowest, and decided to establish our room above them.

I treated some others from five feet higher up in the same manner, as I intended to suspend our hammocks to those; the others still higher

up, which formed a circle, I proposed should form our roof, and above that we thought of extending our good canvas covering.

These preparations occupied us some considerable time. In the interval my wife and the others had made two trips to the sea-shore and had brought back a quantity of materials. With the assistance of the pulley I managed to raise the timbers, piece by piece, as was required, and so I at first established our "ground floor," which I made double, so as to guard against accident; I also placed a balustrade all round it.

This work and a third excursion to the sea-shore occupied us all the morning; no one had had any time to think about preparing our dinner, so on this occasion we were obliged to content ourselves with biscuits.



NATIVE HUTS IN POLYNESIA.

As soon as we had finished our frugal meal we again set to work to complete our airy habitation, which now began to look rather attractive in our eyes.

Our hammocks were promptly suspended to their respective branches, so that by the evening our work was finally accomplished. Joyously I descended with Fritz, and as I found there were still some planks remaining, I set about making a table and two forms, of which the roots of the tree formed the feet, and which I hoped would serve us at meal-times and in many other ways.

By this time I was beginning to feel somewhat tired ; and as our most important work was now accomplished, I resolved to repose for the remainder of the evening, while my wife prepared our supper, and the children collected some firewood and stacked it up as we had done on the previous evening.

Exhausted by my exertions during the day, I at length sat down, and wiping my forehead, I could not repress a sigh, and said, after a pause, to my wife,—

"I must say, my dear, I have worked like a horse all day, and to-morrow I shall rest myself."

"Indeed you must, dear," she replied ; "and for that matter you ought to rest ; for I have calculated the days, and I have ascertained that to-morrow will be Sunday, and that we have already passed one Sunday at work on the shore at our first resting-place."

"I see, my dear wife," I replied, "that you think of everything. I know that we did not have a holiday on Sunday last ; but I believe that in the terrors of our shipwreck, and when there was so much to be done to assure our safety, our work will not appear very sinful in the eyes of Providence. But now that we have a comfortable house and the means of subsistence for the next two months at least, we should be very culpable if we did not endeavour to raise our thoughts from earth to heaven, and to return thanks to God who has so mercifully protected us in our distress."

"I am delighted," said my wife, "to have the opportunity to pass a day without trouble and in quietude ; but it will be necessary to tell the boys, who will sleep all the better for it. I confess that your aerial habitation appears to me solidly built, and I shall have no hesitation in ascending thither with you all, for I do not believe there is any chance of accident, and there, at least, we shall be safe from the attacks of jackals and other wild beasts which might surprise us were we on the ground."

"I am very glad indeed," I replied, "to find that you have overcome your nervousness, and that our new habitation meets with your approval. But let us see what you can give us for supper, and I will call the boys."

They all ran up to me immediately, and our good housekeeper then took from the fire a large earthen pot, the contents of which we had all been very anxious to divine. When the cover was taken off, we recognised the flamingo which we shot the previous day, which my wife said she had boiled in preference to roasting, because Ernest had said that it was an old and tough bird. This foresight on the part of the Professor, who had constituted himself an assistant cook, made us laugh ; but we very soon discovered that he was not far wrong. The bird was cut up, and every one ate his share, and pronounced it delicious.

During our repast the captive flamingo came to us in company with the fowls. He was now so tame that we might easily have taken off his cord without his making any attempt to escape. Our little monkey, too, had entirely lost all his wild habits, and amused us very much with his grimaces. He seemed extremely fond of the boys, and they never failed to reward him with some little tokens of their regard in return.

The old sow even came to visit us now, though she had not thought proper to make her appearance during the whole day. Her friendly grunts appeared to express satisfaction at seeing us all again, and when my wife had milked the cow and had given us all as much as we



required, she presented the remainder to the sow. I remonstrated with her on this generosity; but she said, and with reason, that so long as we had not a better appointed *ménage*, and above all, as we had no jugs, we were obliged to get rid of a great deal of the milk that remained, because we could make neither butter nor cheese with it, and in the absence of any vessels in which to keep the milk in such a climate it would turn before morning. So under the circumstances, and particularly as the salt and the corn had begun sensibly to diminish, she had wished to treat the sow to the milk of which there was more than enough.

"You are always right, my dear wife," I said; "but we can soon replenish our store of salt from the rocks, and we can easily supply ourselves with grain the next time we go to the wreck."

"Ah!" she cried, "that horrible wreck; must you always be going on these risky expeditions? I shall never be happy until you have given up your visits to the ship."

"I can quite comprehend your fears," I said; "but you know very well we never think of embarking unless the sea be quite calm and the weather fine; and you yourself will confess, I am sure, that it will be inexcusable in us, from a feeling of timidity, to abandon all the riches which the vessel can yield us."

While we were thus chattering, the children had lighted the fire, which would at least protect the cattle as long as it burnt, and now we all showed increasing symptoms of sleepiness. In an instant the three eldest boys were up in the tree. It was then my wife's turn. She did not ascend without some fear and hesitation, but she arrived safely at the top of the ladder. I then took Frank upon my back, unfastened the foot of the ladder, and mounted in my turn. It swayed about a good deal owing to the double weight, and rendered my ascent somewhat difficult; but at length I arrived in safety and drew up the ladder after me, to the great joy of the children, for it appeared to them as if we were in a feudal castle, and they were pulling up the drawbridge and setting the enemy at defiance.

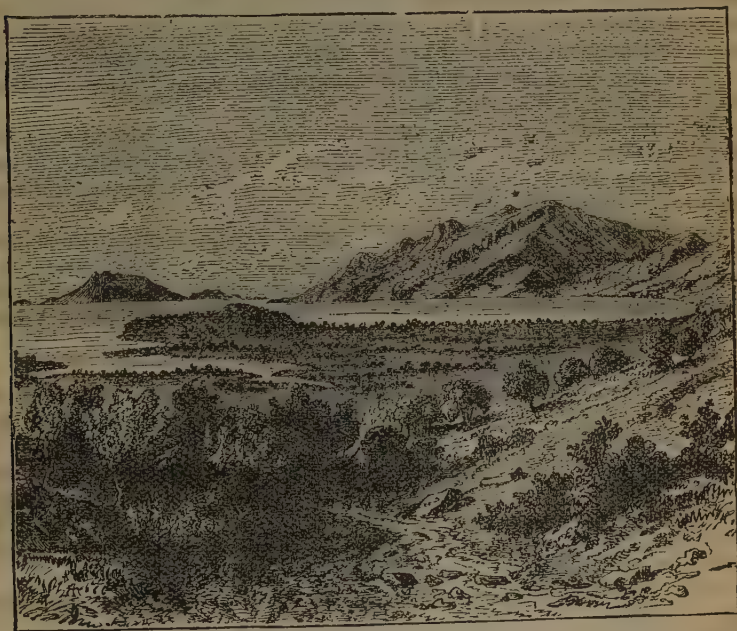
The tranquillity with which the previous night had passed somewhat reassured me for our safety to-night, and I believed that I should be able to dispense with the necessity for keeping up the fire. But I kept our guns ready to defend our animals and to assist the dogs, if any enemy should present itself. So I laid down without fear, and as we were all very much fatigued, we slept soundly and did not awake till sunrise.

We rose quite refreshed. I expressed my astonishment that this time the children had slept in their hammocks without making any complaint whatever, and I told them it was the work of the preceding day that, notwithstanding the novel beds they occupied, had enabled them to enjoy such a quiet and profound sleep. After breakfast I related a parable. In olden times, in a very fertile country, there lived a great king who had two immense kingdoms. One which they called the kingdom of Reality and of Light, because unceasing activity and the purest light always reigned there; the other, situated in the north, in the glacial regions, of which the sovereign alone knew the extent, was called the kingdom of Intolerance or Night, because everything there was inactive and sombre.

The inhabitants of the first-named kingdom lived in the enjoyment of uninterrupted felicity. They wore magnificent gold embroidered gar-

ments, and thousands of the inhabitants surrounded the throne of the king, carrying in their hands shining swords. They were all heroes, and they executed their master's orders with rapidity and precision.

This great king also possessed, at the outskirts of this kingdom of Reality, a large island which he desired to colonize and to cultivate; so he sent there a detachment of his subjects, who were provided with all instruments and materials necessary to carry out the object he had in view.



When these colonists reached the island they found a crowd of servants, whom the king had sent on in advance and who had received instructions to carry out all orders of the colonists. He had also arranged that each one should render an account of his time and of the manner in which he had sown and cultivated his land, and there were secretaries to keep exact registers of the actions of each.

What was the result? Each colonist did just as he liked. Some laid out gardens with small pretty trees, which proved unproductive, instead of planting the beautiful trees which the king had given them. Others

sowed useless grain, which sprung up; but they neglected to take care of it or to cultivate it, so it produced no ear. The greater part of the colonists allowed their fields to go to rack and ruin through negligence, or perhaps because they despised the king's advice, or perhaps from some other motive.

Now the king, as he had said, had caused an exact daily register to be kept of the actions of each individual; and when the day appointed for each one to render an account of what he had received, and the manner in which he had employed it, had arrived, very few of the inhabitants were found who had fulfilled the conditions that had been imposed upon them. So this powerful king condemned these careless ones to punishment and most amply rewarded those who had done well.

"Now, my boys, you seek the meaning of that parable for yourselves, and learn to apply it to your hearts."

My wife praised my parable more than I had ventured to expect; the boys were silent for an instant, and appeared to reflect upon it. Then each of them made their observations, which upon the whole were very much to the point.

After I had replied to a crowd of questions of all sorts, I drew from the different parts of my parable a lesson for each of my sons, and I terminated this discourse by an appropriate prayer. I perceived with pleasure that my children had seriously attended to me, that they had comprehended my advice and wished to profit by it.

"Oh," said Jack, "I wish we only had some hymns to sing."

"For to-day," I replied, "we must do without singing. By degrees your mother will teach you some pretty hymns which she has learnt by heart; for I have a habit of depending entirely upon books which I have read, and of which you have scarcely learnt anything. It would be for all of us a great consolation if we could sing a few hymns this morning; but I ought to ask God's pardon, for I never once thought of saving the Bible from the ship, and that is a book no Christian should be without."

"But," said my wife, "perhaps I can find one in that 'enchanted' bag of mine."

"You are the best of wives," I said, "and quite put me to shame. So in the midst of that tempest and the necessary preparations for our safety, you who were thinking of a number of little things which we males regarded as too trivial to care about, you actually thought of that one thing needful, the safety of our souls. Fetch me this precious book, I beseech you. It is the register of the Great King of whom I spoke to you in my parable, which will teach us how we can live better lives and form our conduct to the Christian standard."

I opened the precious Book with a lively emotion, and read aloud

with deep feeling a number of passages most suited to our situation, to a very attentive auditory. In the midst of that solitude, where for such a time we had heard no human voices but our own, it appeared as if a call from on high, a voice of one of those angels we read of in the Old Testament, had reached us, to tell us that we were still a part of the great human family.



I explained what I had read, and handed it afterwards to each of the boys in turn and desired them to read a passage aloud also. I always endeavoured to make my explanation of the passages to fit as nearly as possible with the circumstances in which we were placed. We finished our morning service with a prayer and a thanksgiving to Heaven.

My young people remained for an instant or two longer tranquil and meditative; but soon, as I did not wish to detain them any longer, they

arose. They thought they ought not to occupy themselves with any work, and forced themselves to pass all their time in thought.

But it appeared to me that they were still too young to be obliged to pass the whole of the day without some outward amusement, so I permitted them to go on with their games. Jack asked me for my bow and arrows, and proposed to point the latter with the porcupine quills which we had carefully put aside. Fritz wished to work at the cases he was making from the skin of the lynx, and came to ask my advice on the subject, and Frank begged, as he was not yet old enough to fire a gun, that I would make him a bow and some arrows.

I was obliged to consent. First I gave him my own arrows, and showed him how he could take out the sand I had put into them and fix on them the quills of the porcupine. We found it would be necessary to bind these afterwards with cord, and for greater security to cover them with a coating of strong glue.

"That is very well," said Jack, "but I should like to know at the same time whereabouts in this country glue is sold, for I would run and get some."

"Ask mamma," said Frank, "for some of that portable soup. She told me her fingers were glued together by it like pitch."

"What do you mean," said Ernest, "by attempting to know more about it than we do, you little goose."

"The expedient is not so bad," I observed; "so take good advice, no matter from what quarter it comes. Many of the most important inventions have originated in heads not much bigger than Frank's, so run and fetch a tablet of the portable soup, boil it in a cocoa-nut shell, and let us at least make the experiment."

While Jack was occupying himself in this manner, I recommended Fritz above all things to clean the skin very carefully, and I seated myself upon the grass and set to work to make a bow out of a piece of bamboo.

It is good, I thought, that my sons should learn as soon as possible the use of bows and arrows. Our supply of powder must sooner or later run short, and if such an accident should happen, we shall have no substitute for it, so it is only prudent that we should provide ourselves as soon as possible with some other means of obtaining food; and since some young savages (much younger than they) can hit a mark at thirty or forty paces, and bring down birds perched in the topmost branches of the trees, my children ought to be able to do the same with equal practice.

While I was occupied with these reflections and making the bows for Frank, Ernest disappeared unnoticed, and as at that moment Fritz was showing me his well-prepared lynx skin, I did not perceive in which direction his brother had gone.

"Now," said I to Fritz, "stretch the skin well out, and then cut the four paws to the necessary length, then the knives and forks will go in. Scrape the inside carefully, so that no flesh or grease may still adhere to it, then rub it well with sand, and finally plunge it into boiling water. As for the remainder of the skin, which you wish to make into a cover, you may treat it in the same way, then stretch it, and when it is half-dry rub it with salt butter from time to time until it gets pliant, then pass it through the hot embers to take out the grease, and you will find the skin prepared. You will then have a case in which you can put the knives and the plate."

While we were talking we heard a shot fired overhead, and two birds fell at our feet. We looked up and saw Ernest's head protruding from between the branches of the trees, and crying out, "I hope I took good aim."

He descended the rope-ladder rapidly and ran with Frank to pick up the game, while Fritz and Jack, leaving off work, hastened into the tree to follow Ernest's example.

I did not notice them till they were nearly up, and then I cried out, "What are you about, what are you about? Do you not remember this is Sunday? It is bad enough that Ernest should have forgotten it."

These words somewhat cooled the ardour of the two elder boys, and they both descended in a somewhat confused manner, at any rate to examine the game which their brother had shot.

We discovered that one of the birds was a thrush and the other a pigeon of a very small species, which in the Antilles are called ortolans, and which are much appreciated as an article of food in consequence of their great delicacy. I noticed at the same time that the wild figs were beginning to ripen and to attract large flocks of these birds, so we should now be well supplied with a new sort of food, for we could keep these birds in casks, and by wrapping them in butter they would keep for a long time.

So I saw with great pleasure that we had here abundant provision for our poultry and pigeons, for I was assured that they would eat a fruit which was so attractive to the wild doves. I communicated the idea to my wife, with which she was greatly pleased. We prepared our two birds for supper the same evening.





CHAPTER XII.

Bows and Arrows.—Naming the Localities.—Falcon's Nest.—Zeltheim.—We retrace our Steps.—Potatoes.—Tropical Vegetation.—Making a Fire.—Cochineal.—Ducks and Geese.



WHILE luncheon was preparing, Jack practised with his bow and arrows, and shot with unquestionable ardour. I had also made a bow and arrows for Frank, who was delighted with them; but, for peace sake, I was also obliged to make Jack a quiver, for a quiver, he said, was as indispensable to an archer as a powder flask to a sportsman. I consented at length, and took the bark from a tree and fashioned it into a sort of quiver.

Just when I had finished this, and when Fritz was showing me his lynx skin, prepared as I had told him, my wife came to call us to our meal, a summons which we gladly obeyed. During the repast I made a proposition to my children which I knew would be very much to their taste.

"Do you not think," I said, "that it behoves us to give names to our dwelling-place and to the different places in this country, as well as other people have done in known lands. We must not, however, give names to the coast-line, for who knows whether some traveller has not already included them in his map by the name of some vessel or saint. But we can at least give names to the places at which we have sojourned or at which some remarkable event has happened, so that in future we may the more easily and quickly understand each other. That will induce us to believe that we are in a well-populated country and in localities to which we have been long accustomed. We will name each place after its particular features or after the events which have taken place there, and shall use only our native tongue in this nomenclature."

"Yes, yes," said Jack, "that will be capital. Whereabouts shall we begin?"

"Begin," I said, "of course at the bay where we first landed. What shall we call it?"

"The Bay of Oysters," suggested Fritz, "because we have found oysters there in great quantities."

"No," said Jack, "let us call it the Bay of Crabs, because one of them bit my leg there."

The others objected to the importance which Jack attributed to such a trifling incident as that; and finally the name suggested by my wife was unanimously adopted, namely Safety Bay.

The spot where we established our first encampment was called Zeltheim, or Tent House. The little island situated at the mouth of Safety Bay was called Shark Island, in commemoration of the skill and courage of Fritz, and the marsh where he had shot the flamingo was called Flamingo Marsh.

"And now what shall we call our new home?" I said. "What name shall we give our aerial habitation?"

Ernest wanted to call it Tree Castle; but this name was not good enough for Fritz, who called it Eagle's Nest. He was followed by Jack, who wanted to call it Fig Town.

"Now," said I, "listen to my proposition. I suggest that we call it Falcon's Nest. You are a pack of young hunters, ardent and quick as falcons. Ernest need not object to this name, for falcons often build their nests upon the trees."

"Hurrah for Falcon's Nest!" they all cried together. "The name sounds very well indeed."

Subsequently the hill from the top of which Fritz and I had vainly endeavoured to discover some trace of our shipwrecked companions, was called Cape Disappointment; and the stream on the banks of which we had been attacked by jackals was denominated Jackal River.

In this way we amused ourselves during our meal, and thus we laid the foundation of the topography of our new country.

As soon as we rose from table Fritz, resumed his work. He took one of the swimming jackets, cut it into pieces, and stuffed it adroitly into the paws of the lynx skin. In this way it was that his mother had made a saddle for Frank while the others were resting at Zeltheim, and Fritz's quick eye had at once perceived it.

"It is still open to us," I said, "and as the day is not very far advanced, if you all would like it, we can take a walk this evening towards Zeltheim."

At these words Fritz worked with renewed ardour, and Jack, who had never thought of using his porcupine skin for any purpose, came and begged me to make a coat of mail of it for Turk.

When I had assisted him to clean the skin by dragging it through the embers and the sand, I fashioned it into the required form, and fastened it with bands upon the back of the patient animal. With this coat of mail the dog presented a most formidable appearance, and appeared to me well protected against the attacks of jackals, or even against a hyæna.

Bill, the other dog, did not find the arrangement at all to his taste,



for every time Turk approached him, or sought his friendly society, the porcupine quills inflicted some sharp wounds upon the inoffensive Bill, who fled away howling terribly, and strongly objected to approach his comrade at all.

Jack however determined to manufacture a head-piece out of the porcupine's head, which would act as a protection for himself against the savages, should we be so unfortunate as to encounter any.

Meantime, Ernest and Frank were practising with their bows and arrows, in which they were assisted by Fritz and Jack also at times. But the evening was now approaching, the heat of the day had in a great measure abated, and the freshness of the air induced us to take a walk ; so the boys clamoured to set out.

"Let us proceed in proper order," I said. "Since it is decided that we are to go to Zeltheim, let us consider whether we ought to follow our old route along by the sea-shore. I do not think we should do so. Let us rather follow the windings of the stream, where we shall have the shade of the trees as we proceed, and perhaps we shall make some new discoveries in that direction.

My suggestion was adopted, and every one prepared to set out under my guidance. Fritz wore the tail of his lynx as a girdle, but the skin was not yet in the proper condition for use. Jack marched proudly along, his head adorned with the helmet he had made from the porcupine skin. Each of us carried a gun and powder-flask, so as to be ready to defend ourselves in the event of meeting any hostile natives or any ill-disposed wild beasts. Jack rather clung to his bow and arrows, and wore his quiver of bark suspended from his shoulders. My wife was the only one of the party who was not armed, and she carried with her a great jar to fill with butter at Zeltheim. Fritz and Jack wanted powder and bullets, and Ernest wanted to catch a couple of ducks, which he thought would be an addition to the menagerie on the bank of our stream at Falcon Nest.

"Now," said I, "let us get on ; and you must make up your minds for some little fatigue, for our way back will be much longer than the way we came."

So we set out. Turk advanced in a most martial manner, wearing his armour. The monkey had also taken a fancy to come with us, and wished to take his usual mount, but when he felt the darts with which his saddle was covered, he uttered cries of anguish and very quickly jumped down again. But that did not prevent him from seeking some other steed, and he leaped upon the back of Bill, who bore him very patiently. But what appeared to me the most extraordinary thing was to see our good flamingo, excited by the general movement, mingle without fear in the procession, and at length, annoyed with the jokes which were played upon it by the children, who could almost rival it in speed, it put itself under my protection, and followed me with a grave and majestic step.

The bank of the stream afforded us a charming route. For a long time we proceeded under the shade of immense trees and upon a most delicious greensward, so we did not hurry along too fast. We took our time, and stopped to look at everything that excited our curiosity. The

boys ran about from right to left, and sometimes disappeared altogether.



In this manner we reached the end of the wood, and I then thought it prudent to call my little troupe together, so that we could march in a less extended manner; but on turning round to summon them, I saw

them coming towards me at full speed. This time Ernest was at the head. He arrived quite out of breath, and it was a few seconds before he could speak. He presented me with three little berries of a clear green colour.

"Potatoes, papa," he cried, as soon as he had recovered his breath; "potatoes, you see."

"What do you mean?" I said. "Where are they? Here, you boys, come along quickly. My dear boy, I can scarcely believe that you have succeeded in finding the fruit of such a precious vegetable; but nevertheless, I must say it looks very like it."

"Yes, certainly papa," said Fritz; "these are the fruit of the potato, and Ernest has been very successful."

"Oh, but," said Jack, "I also should have found them. I should not have passed them by, I can tell you. It would have been very strange if I had."

"Now," said my wife; "don't you boys dispute about this precious discovery. It is very doubtful whether you would have discovered them, for you are too stupid. It was Ernest who called attention to them, and that he discovered them is most probable; but I almost fear that we may be mistaken, for we so easily believe what we wish. There may be some other plants very similar indeed."

We all advanced to the place where Ernest had picked these berries, and we perceived with a joy difficult to express, quite a thicket of potato plants in full flower, and in our enthusiasm these flowers appeared to us more beautiful than Persian roses. Some were just budding, while others were in full blossom. We dug up a quantity of potatoes and filled our game bags with them, promising ourselves a delicious repast that evening.

We then resumed our advance toward Zeltheim. There was a proposition made by some of the party to return to Falcon's Nest at once, so anxious were they to cook their potatoes; but the reason for continuing our route to Zeltheim prevailed, and although we were heavily laden we joyfully continued our expedition.

"My boys," said I, as we proceeded, "the discovery of potatoes is very acceptable to us, and it is a blessing for which we ought to thank God. It reminds me of a passage in the Bible which is very applicable to our situation." I then repeated to them the passage which may be found in the 107th Psalm, verses. 3, 4, 5.

"Yes, indeed," said Jack, "that is like us; and I feel how thankful we ought to be to God for the treasure which He has permitted us to find."

"You are right, my boy," added my wife; "we owe Him more than I can say; for this agreeable vegetable, so wholesome and nourishing, is

is indeed a blessing we do not deserve, and for which we can never be sufficiently thankful to heaven."

We soon arrived at the chain of rocks over which our little stream ran with a soft murmur and then escaped in a charming cascade. By following this we should have arrived at the Jackal River. We were once more obliged to traverse the high grass, which was somewhat difficult. On our right was the chain of rocks; at the left, at some



little distance was the sea; while in front of us extended a rich and most varied pasture land.

The rocks particularly presented a magnificent appearance. It was like a conservatory, where, instead of flower-pots arranged in rows, we had on all sides in the holes of the rocks the most rare and beautiful plants in the world. The plants usually called grasses appeared to me to exceed all others in abundance, but we have much trouble to rear such plants in Europe. There were Indian figs, aloes, cactus with its prickly stem, the serpentine with its long spiny arms; and that which delighted us more than all was the pine-apple, the king of fruits.

We all hastened to secure this treasure, because we all knew it ; and besides, we all knew we could eat it raw. The ape had reached them before the boys, and following his example we all began to eat with an avidity I was obliged to repress in the children, as I was afraid that if they ate too heartily the acidity would cause them considerable inconvenience.

Amongst the various plants I recognised the carata, a species of aloe or guava, of which I gathered some and showed to my children. "Look here, boys," I said ; "see what magnificent flowers they are. This is a discovery even more important than the pine-apple which you devoured so greedily. Look at their straight thin stems which grow to such graceful points."

The children all replied, with their mouths full of pine-apple : "What is the good of flowers without fruit ? The ananas are better than all those. We will gladly give you up the flowers if you will let us keep the pine-apples."

"What greedy fellows you are," I said ; "you are like all the rest in the world, you despise a real and lasting advantage for a temporary pleasure. Now I will just show you the difference. Ernest, go and fetch my tinder-box, and flint, and kindle a fire for us.

"I beg your pardon," replied Ernest, "but I must also find some touchwood."

"Quite right," I said ; "but suppose that we did not possess any, or that our supply was exhausted : how would you make a fire ?"

"Well," said Ernest, "we should have to kindle one as the savages do. Rub two pieces of wood against each other until they take fire."

"That is a very tiresome way for people who are not accustomed to such things," I said ; "and it would be a very long time before you would succeed."

"In that case," replied Ernest, "we should be obliged to wait until we found something that would suit."

"It would not be necessary to wait, we could use pieces of rag ; but we have some other use for that, and of course it would be better if we could find what we want in this tree."

As I spoke, I seized a dry branch of the carata, and took out the core of it, and put it alongside of the flint. I then struck a spark and in an instant my new species of tinder took fire. The children were astonished, jumped with joy, and exclaimed, "It is wonderful ! hurrah for the touchwood tree !"

"Now then," I said, "you see one of the advantages of the tree you despised ; but that is not all the benefits we can derive from the carata. Your mother will be able to tell you how she has thought of repairing your clothes when her stock of thread is exhausted."

"Ah!" said she; "that will very soon happen, I am afraid, and I am frequently much concerned on that subject. I have sought in vain for some substitute for my thread."

"You may make yourself happy," I replied; "you will find in the leaves of the carata a thread quite as good as we are likely to require in this place."

I plucked a leaf and divided it into strong fine thread, which I handed immediately to our good housewife. My children were perfectly astonished.

"Now is it not possible," I said, "for the caratas to render us much greater services than the pine-apples which appeared so very delicious to you all?"

My wife thanked me warmly, and was delighted to think that in future she need have no fear respecting a supply of thread; but she expressed a doubt as to whether we should have time to draw the threads one by one from the leaves.

"What of that?" I said; "one can always provide for that. All we have to do is to allow the leaves to dry in the sun or before the fire, and then we can draw them out with the greatest ease."

"Yes," said Fritz; "I begin to perceive that the carata is more useful than the pine-apple, and is likely to be ten times more serviceable to us here. But what is the use of so many of these thorny plants which we see in such quantities all round us? Almost all gardens are full of them, but I do not see that they are of any value."

"You judge too hastily once again," I replied. "For instance, there is the Indian fig; well, that is a valuable shrub, it grows best in the driest soil, and under these circumstances produces the largest leaves, so I conclude that it draws more nourishment from the air than from the ground. It is sometimes called the 'battledore tree,' because its leaves much resemble the bats with which we play battledore and shuttlecock. Its fruit is a kind of fig which in this climate is wholesome and refreshing."

Scarcely had I pronounced these words than Jack hurried away to fill his pockets with figs; but as they were surrounded with very prickly spines he hurt his fingers very much, and came back to us crying and complaining in a way that elicited roars of laughter from his brothers. I took out the spines from his hands, and showed him how to gather the fruit without hurting himself. I knocked one down into my hat and cut off the top and bottom of the fig with my knife. Then holding it lengthwise between my thumb and fore-finger I took off its formidable skin and gave the fruit to my children to taste. They pronounced it excellent, and each one wished to gather and prepare it for himself in like manner. Fritz knocked one down and very quickly denuded it of

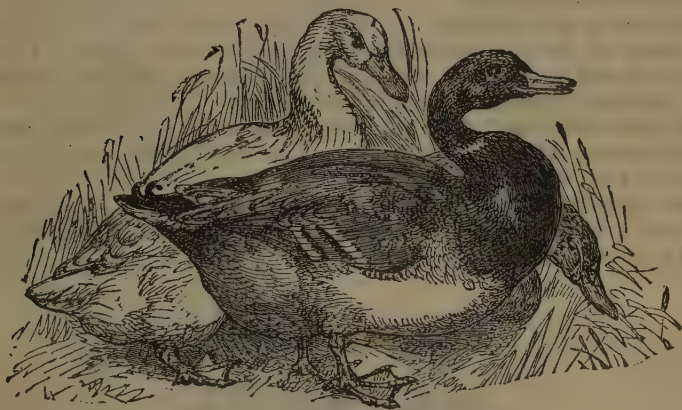
its prickly skin, and politely presented it to his mother, who warmly praised his skill.

Meanwhile Ernest was holding a fig at the end of a knife and examining it attentively. "Look here, papa," he said; "see what a quantity of little insects there are in my fig, turning about in all sorts of ways; they are quite red."

"Ah, ah," I said, "here is another discovery; let me see, this must be the cochineal insect, and it is so too. This is another advantage of this wonderful plant."

"But what is the cochineal insect?" said Jack.

"It is an insect," I replied, "which is nourished by this fruit, upon which it lives, and so a vivid red tint appears to be communicated to it. It is from this insect that the most vivid scarlet colour is extracted."



At length we arrived at Jackal River, and crossing it with all due precaution we were soon at our tent-house again. We found everything in the order we had left it, and then each one employed himself in searching for what he had specially come to obtain.

Fritz went in search of powder and bullets, of which he took a great quantity. My wife and I, with little Frank, went in search of the butter-cask, to fill the pot we had brought with us, while Ernest and Jack attempted to catch the ducks and geese. But these birds had become somewhat wild during our absence, and would not permit the boys to approach them, so the lads were obliged to take them by stratagem.

Ernest had some biscuits in his pockets; he fastened pieces to the end of a long string and threw them into the water, and in a short

time the ducks and geese were drawn to the bank, amid shouts of laughter. We tied the captives two by two by the legs, and each of us took a couple on his shoulders.

We also provided ourselves with some salt, but less than we had intended, for on our way we had half-filled the sack intended for the salt with potatoes, so there was not much room left. We took the coat of mail from Turk's back, and replaced it by the small bag of potatoes and salt.

Thus fully laden, we retraced our steps towards Falcon's Nest. Our little caravan had a somewhat curious appearance, and this was still more enhanced by the ducks and geese, which uttered continual cries, and increased the absurdity of our appearance. But the amusement this caused us made us forget the weight of our burdens, and we were not particularly glad when we arrived at our house, for the time had passed so very agreeably.

But our joy was still more increased. Our good manager immediately took some of the potatoes and roasted them for our supper. I myself went and milked the cow and the goats, while the children ran about and rendered all the assistance in their power.

I set the ducks and geese at liberty after I had clipped their wings so as to prevent their escape, in hopes that they would accustom themselves to their new surroundings.

Our repast, seasoned by a good appetite, proved delicious ; and after thanking God for all His benefits, we reached our aerial castle, where we slept soundly until the dawn of the following day.





CHAPTER XIII.

The Sledge. — New Laid Eggs. — The Great Salmon. — The Kangaroo. — A Lesson in Self-control. — Supper and Sleep.



HAD remarked the previous day as I was returning along the sea-shore, that amongst a quantity of other things, there was sufficient timber to construct a sledge, by the aid of which I thought we should be able to transport to Falcon's Nest the butter cask and other heavy articles of which we stood in need, and which were too bulky to be carried by the animals. So I immediately made up my mind to go down to the beach early in the morning, before my children had got up, and to collect all I thought necessary. However, I decided to take Ernest with me, because his laziness had really some need of stimulation, and also because, in case of alarm, Fritz would be a more efficient protection for the family.



Scarcely had the first rays of daylight appeared than I woke Ernest. We descended without rousing the others, whom we left sleeping soundly.

I took our donkey with us, and made him drag a large branch of a tree, which I thought would be useful. As we were on our way I asked Ernest if he were not disgusted at having been awakened so early, and above all things, whether I had not deprived him of the pleasure of shooting thrushes and ortolans with his brothers.

"Oh, no, father!" replied he, "I really do not care a bit now I am up, and I much like to be with you; besides, my brothers will leave me plenty of birds, and I am quite sure they will all miss their first shots.

"What makes you think so?" I asked.

"Because they all forgot to draw the large bullets from their guns and replace them with small shot. If they had done that even, it is probable that they would aim too low, and the shot would not carry to the top of the tree."

"It is not improbable you are right," I answered; "but I think you might as well have given your brothers a hint upon that point, and with your cool nature you are perhaps the wisest of us all. It is always well to do everything coolly and after reflection, but there are circumstances in which too much reflection is injurious, and in which instantaneous decision is necessary. For instance, in the moment of surprise or sudden danger it is good not to lose one's presence of mind, but to decide promptly what ought to be done. To act so is to possess one of the most precious attributes of human nature. Now, what should you do if you were to see a bear advancing towards us?"

"I believe," he replied, "I should be very much tempted to run away."

"I think you would," I said, "and I appreciate your frankness in confessing as much; but if you were to reflect you would see at once that the bear, being an excellent runner, could very easily overtake you."

"Well, then, I should take aim at him so soon as I saw him running towards me."

"That would be equally imprudent," I replied; "for it would not be at all surprising if in your hurry you failed to wound him mortally and only succeeded in irritating him still more. On the other hand, if you were to wait till he were near you, your gun might miss fire, and as it would be too late to load again, you would be torn to pieces in an instant."

"It would then be much better for me to lie down on the ground and pretend to be dead, and let the bear come back again when he felt inclined."

"That expedient might perhaps help you," I said, "for bears as a rule do not like dead flesh."



THRUSHES.

"Well, then, I could fight him with the stock of my gun, or even with my hunting knife."

"But what could your blows effect against an animal so powerful as he. You would very soon be taken round the neck and borne to the ground. Indeed, I scarcely know myself how you could best defend yourself against such an enemy. I believe the best way would be to take refuge behind the ass, and to allow him to be devoured, and then you could seize a favourable moment to fire your pistol at the bear, or thrust your hunting knife into his throat."

Thus conversing we reached the sea-shore, congratulating ourselves that no bear had taken into its head to put our system of defence to the test. We very soon met with some pieces of wood which were the objects of our journey. We placed them upon the great branch of tree we had brought with us, and which, as it was still covered with small twigs, served as a sort of sledge. To complete our load I dug up a chest which was half buried in the sand, and placed it beside the wood, then, having furnished ourselves with long sticks to be used as levers in case of necessity to assist the donkey in his progress, we returned to Falcon's Nest.

As we approached we could hear shots fired, for the ortolan shooting was then in full swing. But as we approached a cry of joy rose up, and the boys ran to us at full speed. The chest which we had brought with us was opened, but nothing very important was found inside it; it was merely a sailor's chest, and contained nothing but old clothes and linen which the sea-water had entirely spoiled.

My wife upbraided me very much for having absented myself without giving her warning, but the sight of the wood we had recovered, and the hopes we could indulge that we should soon be able to transport the butter and other treasures left behind at Zeltheim, served to appease her anger, and we all went to breakfast cheerfully.

I afterwards examined the birds the boys had shot, and I counted four dozen of thrushes and ortolans; but Fritz as well as Jack had fired their first shots as Ernest had predicted, for they had forgotten to draw the bullets and substitute the smaller shot, but they had made up for this failure by the accuracy of their aim. They had used so much powder and shot that when they wished to resume their shooting my wife stopped them, and pointed out that at that rate our ammunition would very soon be exhausted, and we had birds quite sufficient for that time.

I approved of this sensible advice, and desired the boys not to be so prodigal of their powder and lead in future, for those were our only means of defence, and almost the only means we possessed of obtaining food. I also advised them at least to practise more economy until we should be able to procure more ammunition from the wreck, and I told them how to set snares on the topmost branches of the trees, and

pointed out to them that the thread drawn from the carata leaves would supply them with materials to make these snares. My advice was quickly followed. I showed them how to proceed to catch the birds, and as they understood it, I allowed Frank and Jack to go on with this work while Fritz and Ernest assisted me in making a sledge.

While we were all thus engaged at our work the fowls uttered most alarming cries, and so loud were they that we believed a fox had sprung



in the midst of them. We all hurried up. Ernest, whose eyes happened to glance upon the monkey, remarked that he was following the fowls and examining them most attentively. They were saved by the arrival of my wife. The monkey ran away all of a sudden towards the trunk of a fig-tree. Ernest ran after him, and was fortunate enough to take him in the very act of devouring a new-laid egg. The monkey appeared very much abashed and ran behind another root, and from thence into the high grass. But Ernest followed him up closely and

brought back to us four eggs which my wife received with great delight. We soon put a stop to this robbing on the part of our monkey, and it was resolved that he should be tied up at all times when the hens were laying or appeared likely to lay. When we had time we let the prisoner loose, and, guided by his instinct, we always found the place where the eggs had been deposited. My wife wished to collect them and set some, so that we might have a brood of chickens to increase our farm-yard.

Meanwhile, Jack had climbed up into the tree, and had already made a great many snares for the fig-eaters. When he came down he imparted to us the agreeable intelligence that our pigeons were already beginning to make their nests in the branches. I then forbade the boys to fire into the tree for fear of injuring the poor birds, and I recommended them to be very careful where they set their traps, for fear of taking our own pigeons.

I had not neglected the construction of my sledge all this time, and it was soon completed. It was very simple ; two small curved pieces of wood were fastened together with three cross-beams, one at each end and in the middle, and so placed that the curve was upward, so as to retain the load in its place. This was my master-piece of work.

As I had not raised my eyes from my work all the time, I did not perceive until I returned to my wife and family, that she and the boys were busily employed plucking the ortolans, of which about two dozen, spitted upon an officer's sword, were roasting before the fire. The use to which they put that sword appeared to me a very good one, but the prodigal manner in which they were cooking the birds appeared to me wasteful, and I said as much. But my wife replied that it was not intended that we should eat them all at once, but that they should be half-cooked, and kept wrapped up in butter according to my own suggestions.

I had nothing to oppose to this, so I prepared for an expedition to Zeltheim, which I knew must be undertaken immediately after dinner. Ernest alone consented to accompany me, while Fritz remained for the defence of the family.

Immediately the dinner was over Ernest and I prepared for our departure ; and when we had each of us received, besides our arms, a well-made sheath from Fritz containing a knife, fork, and spoon, we set about harnessing the donkey and the cow to our sledge. Bill was invited to accompany us, while Turk was left behind. We took our leave and set out joyfully with our little train.

As our sledge would glide more easily over the sand than over the thick high grass, we took our way by the sea-side, and arrived without any adventure at Zeltheim, where we immediately unharnessed our

animals, so as to let them feed while we loaded the sledge, not only with the butter-cask, but with the powder-barrel, the tub of cheese, some bullets, shot, and the porcupine armour which was intended for Turk.

The occupations were so absorbing that we did not at first perceive that the animals, attracted by the luxurious herbage which grew on the opposite side of the river, had crossed Family Bridge and had wandered out of sight.

I therefore despatched Ernest in search of them, and told him to take Bill with him, as I thought that they had not got very far away and that



there would be no danger in trusting them. Meanwhile I set out to look for a suitable place for a bath, which would be most delightful after our walk.

I soon arrived at Safety Bay, and I noticed that it was shut in by a marsh covered by magnificent reeds and by a chain of rocks which extended some distance into the sea and formed a delightful bathing-place, which looked almost as if it had been arranged for separate machines, and was perfectly safe.

I shouted to Ernest, and pending his arrival I cut some reeds which I anticipated would prove very useful. As Ernest had not by this time

made his appearance, I retraced my steps in search of him, calling to him as I proceeded.

At length I perceived him fully extended in the shade in front of our tent enjoying a *siesta*, while the ass and the cow were quietly grazing beside him.

I scolded him soundly for thus wasting his time in sleep, and I repeated my directions to him to refill the small bag while I went to bathe, saying that when I had had my dip he could indulge in a bath also. So I went away in the direction of the beach once again.

I enjoyed the bath immensely, but for fear of keeping Ernest waiting too long I hurried as much as possible. I dressed quickly and hastened up to the place I had left him, rather anxious to see how he had got on during my absence.

I sought him in vain, and I was already beginning to think that the young scamp had gone off again to sleep in some quiet corner, when I suddenly heard him cry out,—

"Papa, papa, a fish, an enormous fish; I cannot hold him; he has swallowed my line, and is dragging me into the sea!"

I ran to his assistance and found him stretched at full length upon the bank of the stream with extended arms struggling with an enormous fish, which every moment threatened to drag him into the water.

I hastened to help him, and holding the line tightly began to "play" the fish a little. I let him go for a moment and then pulled him in again until he was quite exhausted, when we drew him close to land, and then Ernest despatched him with a blow on the head with an axe. We pulled him ashore and found that he was a magnificent fellow about fifteen pounds weight. It was a splendid present to take home with us, and the very sight of it would gladden the heart of our excellent housekeeper.

"Well, my boy," I said, "this time you have not only worked with your head, but with hands and feet also, and your whole body. I congratulate you with all my heart, for if you have provided us with food for some days you have also behaved like a sportsman."

"Yes," replied Ernest, "it is very fortunate that I recollected to bring my fishing tackle with me."

"Indeed it was most fortunate," I replied; "but how did it happen that you managed to catch such a fine fish?"

"I knew there were some smaller fish about here," he replied; "and I baited my hook with a crab, and before long that enormous fellow took the bait."

We examined it attentively, and I recognised the fish as the salmon. I then set about cleaning it and wrapping it up in salt, to take back to Falcon's Nest in good condition, as the weather was so very hot.

While I was thus engaged Ernest had a bath in the sea, and by the time he returned I had almost finished what I was about, and had still a little time left afterwards to collect some more salt. Then, all our arrangements being completed, we loaded our spoils upon the sledge



THE KANGAROO.

and started home again, having first replaced the planks upon the bridge, which Ernest had taken up to prevent the animals from straying.

We had scarcely got half-way, when just as we were crossing the high grass, Bill suddenly ran on before us, and, barking loudly, started a curious

animal, which appeared to jump rather than to run.

Bill's attack caused the animal to run right and left in front of us, and I took an opportunity to shoot as he went by, but I fired with such precipitation that I missed. Ernest, who was close behind me, had

noticed the hurried manner in which I fired, and just then the animal, having escaped from the dog, was lying hidden in the long grass. But Ernest had marked the spot, and advancing quietly fired with such accuracy of aim that the animal fell dead in his tracks.

We ran up and found one of the most curious animals imaginable. It was about the size of a sheep with a tail as large as a tiger's, the eyes and skin were like a mouse, the ears were as large as those of a rabbit, the paws were like those of the squirrel and armed with claws, but short, while the hind legs were like stilts almost, and of a very curious development.

For a long time we gazed at this singular creature without speaking, and I could not recollect that I had ever seen any animal at all resembling it. Ernest at length, having been carefully studying it for a long time, uttered a cry of joy, and after a few seconds' further consideration pronounced it to be a kangaroo.

I tied the kangaroo by the four feet to a pole, and we carried it to the sledge, upon which we fastened it carefully.

Bill, who had at first started the animal, and had afterwards lost the scent in the long grass, now came back to us and was received with many caresses and with much commendation. But this reception did not appear to him entirely satisfactory; he dashed at the kangaroo and bit it deeply.

It then occurred to me that if the blood did not flow freely perhaps the heat of the climate would prevent our keeping the animal, so I plunged my hunting-knife into its neck, when the blood flowed in abundance. We then replaced the kangaroo upon the sledge, and resumed our homeward route.

Ernest was so delighted at having killed the game that he did not give vent to any of his usual observations. The importance of the subject quite occupied his mind.

"Ah!" he exclaimed; "what will they think at home when they see such a splendid prize and hear that I killed it!"

"I must confess," I replied, "that your hand was steady and your eye correct. Let us look a little closer at your quarry."

"It has four incisors," said Ernest; "and consequently must belong to the ruminating order of animals."

"That is well argued," I replied; "but it also possesses a pouch, which is the distinctive sign of the marsupials. It is certainly a kangaroo; one of those animals which were unknown to our naturalists until the discovery of New Holland by Captain Cook, who was the first person to discover and to describe them. So I may truly congratulate you upon your success."

"Father," said Ernest, "you appear quite as much pleased that I have shot the kangaroo as if you had killed it yourself."

"That is because I love my son better than myself, and his success pleases me more than my own would do."

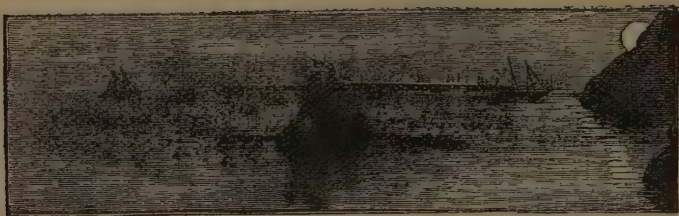
We arrived at Falcon's Nest in due course, where we were received with all the usual demonstrations of affection. They gazed at our captures with wide-open eyes; all were happy and contented, except Fritz. I could see that he was disappointed that Ernest had killed the kangaroo and that he had not; but he struggled manfully against this feeling, and at length joined cheerfully in the conversation on the subject, so that no one but myself remarked his little ebullition of temper. However it was almost impossible for him to refrain from glancing every now and then with envy at the kangaroo; and after many remarks upon his preoccupation, he said to me with a smile,—

"Yes, you have done very well, and brought home some new things; but the next time you go out upon an expedition I hope you will take me with you, for there is nothing to do here at Falcon's Nest. We have only caught two or three ortolans in the snares, and it is very tiresome stopping here."

"Yes, my friend," I said; "yet the most amusing things are not always the best; but since you have overcome the way with which you regarded Ernest's success, I promise you that you shall accompany me. The first thing to-morrow morning you and I will go over to the ship. If you do not kill any game, you will think perhaps that you have been treated with great confidence in remaining here to take care of your mother and brothers, and it is a good thing to accustom yourself to restrain your ardour for hunting. The man who would live calmly and happily ought always to be master of his inclinations."

I was somewhat surprised at seeing my younger sons approach me most solemnly dressed up in the most fantastic costumes; but this was explained by my wife, who informed me that during my absence she had employed herself in washing the children's clothes and linen, and had dressed them up in the sailor's clothes which she had found in the chest that I had brought from the sea-shore. They certainly presented the most comical appearance. One was wrapped in a long night-shirt, another was attired in a pair of trousers which came up to his neck, while a third was almost completely concealed in a large pilot jacket.

The day soon came to a termination as we were continuing our usual occupations. Some of us distributed fresh grass sprinkled with salt to the animals, which was quite a feast for them; and I occupied myself in dressing the kangaroo. I hung the body up to the roots of the fig-tree, after having cut a portion off for our supper. The refuse I threw to Turk and Bill, and they made a good meal. Besides the kangaroo flesh we had an excellent dish of fish and potatoes. Supper was very soon over as we were very drowsy, and, ascending to our usual perch, we were all quickly wrapped in deep sleep.



CHAPTER XIV.

Skinning the Kangaroo.—Jack and Ernest Sent Back.—A Visit to the Wreck.—More Useful Things Found.—Towed by a Turtle.—We Return in Safety.—Starting for Falcon's Nest.—The Tortoise-shell.—A Bottle of Wine.



I GOT up at cock-crow next morning and descended from the tree before the others were awake, so that I might skin the kangaroo. It was quite time that I did so; for the dogs, which had tasted the refuse the night before, had made up their minds to feast on him again, and before I had reached the ground they had already torn the head from the animal, which was suspended to the curving roots of the tree, and were enjoying their breakfast thoroughly. Without losing any time I commenced to skin the kangaroo, having first taken away the flesh as carefully as possible. This work took some time and gave me a good deal of trouble, so I made but slow progress, and in the interval all my family had descended from the tree and had breakfasted without me, as they did not wish to interrupt me in my occupation.

When at length I had finished, I was obliged to retire to wash myself, for I was covered with blood, and I found a change of clothing in the chest which had been washed ashore.

While I was recommending Fritz to make ready for our departure, it struck me that Ernest and Jack had disappeared, and no one seemed to know in what direction they had gone. I was somewhat alarmed at this, as my wife had no idea where they were; but she fancied that they had only gone to dig up some potatoes, of which we stood in need, and I was obliged to content myself with this reply. I made up my mind, however, to give them a scolding on their return, for they had no business to wander about alone in that country. Fortunately they had taken Turk with them, as a protection in case of necessity. Without troubling myself about them any further I started with Fritz, having

taken farewell of my wife, with whom I left Bill as a guard, and I had made her mind easy this time because we had taken every possible precaution to ensure a safe and happy return.

We reached the Jackal River without any adventure, and there, to our great astonishment, Masters Jack and Ernest suddenly appeared from a thicket, uttering joyous shouts, and expressed the strongest desire to accompany us upon our expedition.

Their pleasure at the prospect of joining us was so great that I did not venture to express my disapproval as I ought to have done, and I merely reprimanded them both for having left us in such a manner in an unknown country. I declined to allow them to come with us, partly because their presence was not necessary, and partly because their absence had caused their mother a good deal of uneasiness. I seized the opportunity, therefore, to send back the latest intelligence to my wife; for in the morning I had foreseen that we should be obliged to remain on the wreck longer than usual, as it would be impossible to construct such a raft, as I hoped to make, in a single day. I had not had the courage to communicate this to my wife before I had left home, and hint at a two days' separation, because she had so often begged me not to stay away long. In sending back the children, therefore, I should be able to reassure her, and to save myself the reproach of having concealed my intentions. I explained to the boys what they were to say to their mother. I desired them to obey her strictly in all things, and then recommended them to collect some salt so as not to go back empty-handed, and to be sure to return home before dinner-time, so as to save their mother any anxiety regarding them. That they might be able the more easily to carry out my instructions, I told Fritz to give them the silver watch he carried, so that they might not be late; but I should have had some trouble in compelling him to do so had I not held out some hopes of his being able to find a gold one on board the ship.

So we took leave of the boys, embarked in our little boat, and falling in with the current in the bay, we quickly arrived at the wreck without accident.

As soon as we had moored our small craft we set about collecting materials for the construction of our raft. Before long we had discovered a number of casks, which I thought well suited to our purpose. They were empty, and well hooped, so we nailed them down, and to the number of a dozen bound them together with cords and pieces of wood. In this way we commenced to build, without much delay, a raft which would contain three times as much as our boat of tubs.

The whole day was occupied in this work. We scarcely rested a moment to dine upon the cold provisions we had brought with us, for

we did not wait to search for anything better on board the ship. So as we were very tired and almost exhausted, we made up our minds to sleep on board the wreck, and having taken every precaution, in case a storm should rise during the night, we went to sleep comfortably in the captain's cabin, and enjoyed a long and luxurious night's rest.

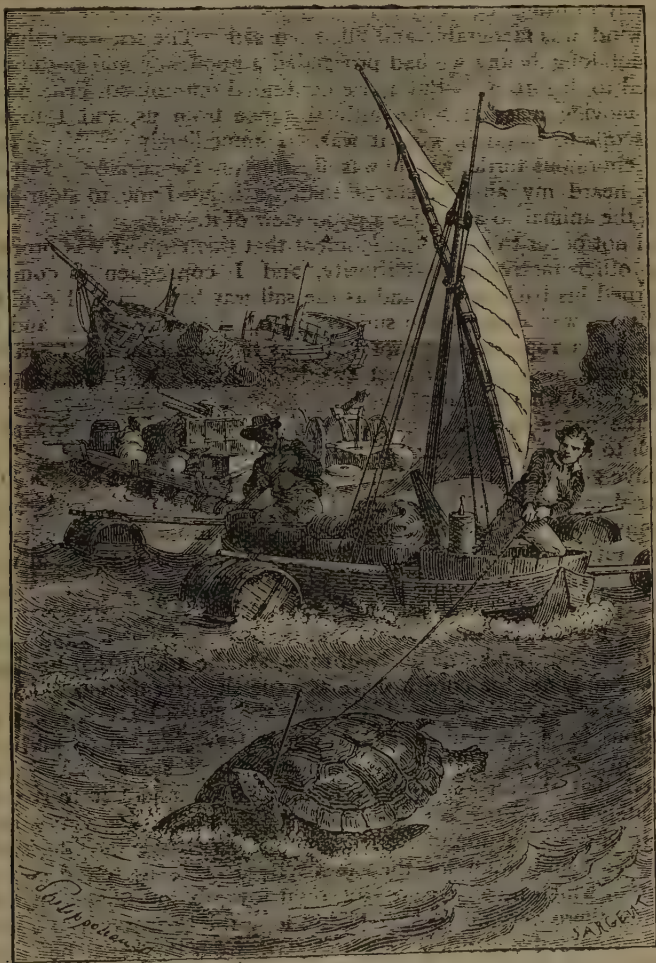
We rose early next morning and, after pouring out our thanks to Heaven for having preserved us from accident during the night, we set about loading our raft and boat most energetically.

We commenced by stripping the cabin which we had occupied during the voyage, of the different articles which belonged to us. Then we took off the locks from the doors, the hinges from the shutters, and put them all on board. We were delighted to find a couple of officer's trunks, but the armourer's and carpenter's chests we took possession of with much greater joy. We immediately carried the first two on board the raft, but as the others were too heavy we were obliged to empty them piece by piece, and store them on board. The coffers in the captain's cabin were all filled with valuables, and contained a large assortment of jewellery. There were gold watches, snuff-boxes, rings, and a quantity of other jewellery of great value, probably intended for presents or barter. We even noticed a silver casket full of gold and silver coins, and we yielded somewhat to the temptation to take some. But soon after, other objects engaged our attention; for instance, some plain covers which would suit equally well for us in place of those we had already taken from the captain's cabin at our last expedition, and two dozen fine young European fruit-trees, which we carefully embarked, with the object of planting them. I recognised the pear-tree, the peach, the almond, the apple, the apricot and the chestnut, which we had last seen in our own dear native land.

We subsequently discovered a quantity of iron bars, two grindstones, cart wheels, and a complete set of farrier's tools, pickaxes, shovels, ploughs, chains, brass wire, some sacks full of maize and other grain, even a hand-mill; in fact a complete supply of everything necessary and likely to be useful for a European colony in a foreign land. We found also a saw-mill, of which all the parts were properly numbered, but it would be necessary to provide the proper amount of force to set it going.

It was really a difficult matter to decide what we should leave and what we should take with us. It was out of the question to think of removing everything we saw, and on the other hand we were very unwilling to abandon any of the useful things and leave them on board the wreck which might be dashed to pieces at any time. Consequently we loaded the boat and the raft with everything we thought most useful, and in the last place we took with us an entirely new net and a towing

rope. To the net, by some accident, two harpoons with the necessary rope used in whale fishing were attached. Fritz begged me to fix one



of them on the fore part of our boat of tubs, so that he would be able to use it if occasion offered, and as I did not anticipate any danger, I allowed him to do as he wished.

It was past midday when our loading was completed, and after attaching our raft to the boat we shoved off from the wreck, and steered, not without some fear of accident, towards that part of the coast which lay directly in front.

The wind was favourable and filled our sail. The sea was calm, and it was not long before we had proceeded a good way and nothing had happened to disturb us. But as we continued our course, Fritz noticed a large moving mass at some little distance from us, and I took up the telescope to ascertain what it was. I immediately perceived that it was an enormous turtle, which was floating on the surface. Fritz had scarcely heard my announcement than he begged me to steer gently towards the animal so as to get a good view of it.

It did not occur to me at the moment that this request was prompted by any other motive than curiosity, and I consequently complied. Fritz turned his back to me, and as the sail was between us I could not see what he was about, when suddenly I felt a terrible shock, and then the noise of a rope running rapidly off its reel was heard. Then there was a second shock, and our boat was dragged away with great rapidity. I now guessed what had happened.

"In the name of Heaven," I exclaimed, "what are you about? Do you wish to upset us?" But the lad cried out—

"I have got him! I have got him! He cannot escape me now!"

I was then convinced that the lad had harpooned the turtle, and it being only wounded, was dragging us behind it in its flight.

I promptly lowered the sail and ran to the bow of the boat with a hatchet, intending to cut the cord and let the animal go, harpoon and all, but Fritz so earnestly begged me to wait a little, assuring me that there was no danger, and pointing out that by so doing I should lose a splendid harpoon and a quantity of rope, and he added that he himself would certainly cut the cord if there was the slightest danger.

Thus we advanced, dragged through the water by the turtle at a tremendous pace. I had enough to do to steer our boat properly, and to prevent ourselves from being dashed against some rock. But I remarked that the turtle appeared anxious to drag us out to sea, so I immediately hoisted the sail, and as the wind was blowing very strongly on shore the animal found the resistance too strong for him, and he turned about and swam for the land. By degrees he towed us across the current which traversed the bay, right towards Falcon's Nest, where fortunately there were no rocks. Before long the boat received a shock, and we grounded some few hundred yards from the bank, but we had the satisfaction of seeing that our boat remained upright notwithstanding.

I immediately jumped out in order to recompense the pilot who had

guided us so well. With the assistance of the cord I soon reached the animal which, fatigued by swimming, was making up his mind to crawl upon land, and dealt him a severe blow on the head with my hatchet. But he fought so with his feet that I cut off two of them, and then decapitated him.

Fritz, uttering a loud shout of triumph, fired his gun, and so excited the curiosity of those on shore that they all came hurrying down to the beach. Fritz jumped out of the boat, placed the turtle's head on the muzzle of his gun, ran ashore, and was saluted, as I myself was, with a thousand questions and congratulations.

After a few reproaches from my wife, for having left her to pass the night alone with the youngest children, the capture of the turtle was proudly recounted, and we were very thankful that the adventure had not had serious consequences. But we were none the less astonished with the ease with which Fritz had cast his harpoon, which was deeply imbedded in the animal's body.

I requested my wife to go with two of the children and bring down the sledge and our animals, so that we might at least store some part of our cargo in safety. Meantime the tide had flowed, and our boat was very soon carried up the beach, so I took advantage of the circumstance to moor her as firmly and as far inland as possible. I rolled to the edge of the raft two large masses of lead, and I attached the raft and the boat to these with strong cords so that they could not easily break away. While I was thus occupied the sledge arrived, upon which we placed the turtle first and surrounded it with some lighter portions of our cargo, as, for instance, the mattresses; but as the turtle by itself weighed about three hundred pounds it was a matter of great difficulty even for our united strength to hoist it upon the sledge.

To drag it up afterwards we were also obliged to lend our assistance, and in this way our joyous cavalcade started for Falcon's Nest. On the way the children plied me with a thousand questions respecting the casket of silver and the jewellery we had found on the wreck, for Fritz had given a hint of it, and it was already distributed in imagination. Jack had mentally appropriated a golden snuff-box, while Little Frank wanted a bag of doubloons.

"But what will be the use of them," I said. "Do you want to take snuff, Jack? and Frank, do you want to sow the doubloons?"

"No," replied Jack, "I only wanted the box to collect beetles and insects in; there are some splendid ones here."

Frank said he wished to buy honey cakes with the doubloons, because he found the biscuits so hard. We could not help smiling at the singular wishes of the two lads.

"As for the honey cakes," said his mother, "Frank has a very good

reason to think of them ; for to-day as he was stirring up a nest of wild bees which he found in the hole of a tree, probably with the idea of making observations in natural history, he got considerably stung in the face, and perhaps he has made at his own expense a discovery that may prove useful to us."

When we arrived at Falcon's Nest, my first business was to take off the shell of the turtle. I said it was necessary to turn it on its back for this purpose, and to cut out the flesh ; but as my wife doubted the possibility of getting the shell off, I took my hatchet and cut a portion of the animal, sufficient for our supper, which I advised my wife to grill with a little salt, as it required no other seasoning.

"But," said she, "I must first cut away this green part which hangs around the flesh, which appears very disgusting to me."

"By no means," I exclaimed hastily, "that is the much-esteemed fat, and is the most delicate part of the animal. We must salt whatever portion of the flesh we do not immediately require ; we may give the head, feet, etc., to the dogs."

"Papa," said Jack, "may I have the shell ?"

"Well !" exclaimed Fritz, "it is like your impudence to ask for it : I rather think that is my property."

"I want to have it," said Ernest. "It would make a capital shield to defend me against the savages."

"No doubt you would wear it on your back then," I said, "and run away as hard as you could. What shall we do with it ?"

"I will make a little boat of it," said Jack. "You will see how well it will float."

"And I," added Frank, "would make a house of it ; it would do very well for me."

"All these suggestions would be very well, my dear boys," I said, "if we were only at play, but I wish that you would think of some more useful way of employing it under present circumstances. Now, Fritz, what do you say ? You are the legitimate owner."

"I would make a basin of it and fix it upon the bank of the river, where we could always get clean water to wash in."

"Very good," I replied. "At any rate your suggestion is of a more practical tendency and for general use. We would proceed to carry out your idea at once, if we had only the clay to cement it upon the bank."

"Oh, I can show you where to find some," exclaimed Jack ; "I have some at the foot of the tree."

"Yes," replied my wife, "he came to me this morning after he had been down at the river, in such a muddy condition, that I was obliged to wash him from head to foot."

"When the basin is fixed," said Ernest, "I will show you what I have found; they are already a little withered. They are roots, a species of radish, I believe; but I did not like to taste them, although I saw the old sow eating them very heartily."

"You acted wisely, my boy," I replied; "for there are many things which though innocuous to animals are not suited for man's consumption. Let us see these roots of yours. How did you discover them?"

"I was wandering about in the wood, when suddenly I noticed the



sow turn up something and eat it with great relish. I ran after her and then I came upon a cluster of these roots, which I brought for you to see. Here they are."

"You have made a valuable discovery, Ernest, unless I am greatly mistaken, for these, in conjunction with the potatoes, will keep us supplied with wholesome food as long as we remain here; for I believe these roots are maniocs, or yams, from which they make the cassava bread in the West Indies. But we must first prepare the roots very carefully, otherwise they will not be good to eat, for they contain a dan-

gerous poison. If you have taken note of the place, and if we can find it again without difficulty, we can at least try to make some bread, and I hope our experiment will be successful."

We had quite unloaded our sledge, and I departed immediately with the children to secure another load before night. My wife remained with Frank to prepare supper, and I suggested that she should prepare us a princely repast with turtle, for after our fatigue we should need it.

As we went along Fritz asked me whether it was with the shell of the turtle that they made such pretty things, and if it were not rather a pity to use the shell as a basin.

I told him that the turtle such as we had captured was only good to eat, and that the beautiful tortoise-shell, which is so highly prized, belongs to another species which is not good for food, and is called the *caretta*. I also explained to him how this *caretta* is prepared by fire, and how it comes out most beautifully polished and shaded.

As soon as we reached the raft we hastened to load the sledge with everything that we could carry. First came the two trunks, then four carriage wheels and the handmill, which the discovery of the yams now rendered doubly precious in my eyes. Finally, we heaped up all the small objects we could find room for.

When we returned to our home, my wife welcomed us with the greatest delight, and said to me laughing, "You have worked very hard the last two days, but in return I have provided for you a supper which I do not think could be improved upon. Come here and see what refreshing beverage I have cooling for you."

I followed her, and from a shady spot she drew out a bottle which promised us some excellent wine.

"There," said my wife, "it was for your sake I went to look for this on the sea-shore to-day, and I have taken the greatest care to keep it cool all this time. The children think it is canary, and I hope they may be right, that it may be the more acceptable to you."

For want of a corkscrew, I drew the cork with a sharp-pointed reed, and I found it actually was one of the most delicious canary wines I had ever tasted. I felt re-invigorated immediately. I thanked my wife warmly, while the children surrounded me and begged me to let them taste it. I gave each of them a little in turn, but soon they became so excited and noisy, that I resolved not to do so again, and to hide the bottle in a safe place.





CHAPTER XV.

All Fast Asleep.—Another Visit to the Wreck.—The Pinnacle.—The Penguins.—The Manioc.—The Lever and Fulcrum.—Cassava Bread.—Various Employments.



WHEN I awoke next morning all my family were sound asleep, but I was up very early, as I was somewhat anxious respecting the two boats I had left upon the beach the previous day. So I descended the tree as silently as possible, and when I reached the ground I found nearly all the animals moving about. The dogs ran up to welcome me and covered me with caresses, the fowls flapped their wings and crowed, the goats bounded away into the grass in which the donkey was still reclining fast asleep. He did not appear altogether to appreciate the motive for disturbing him, and seemed rather inclined to refuse to move; but without taking any notice of his objection, I harnessed him to the sledge, leaving the cow still undisturbed, as she had not been yet milked. I signed to the dogs to follow me, and we started on our way to the sea-shore.

When we arrived there I was delighted to see that the pieces of lead to which I had fastened the boats had been sufficient to moor them safely. I did not put any very heavy load upon the sledge, because I wanted to return to Falcon's Nest as soon as possible, and besides I did not want to overload the poor donkey.

The sun was already high in the heaven when I returned to the tree. The whole family were still fast asleep, so I called to them in a loud voice to get up, but it was not until after a great many repetitions that I obtained a reply. My wife was the first to make her appearance, and she was much surprised to find the day so far advanced.

"I really think," she said, "that there must be some magic virtue in the mattresses you brought which makes us sleep so soundly, for I had some difficulty in getting up, and the children also, for they are now rubbing their eyes, and stretching their arms, and are almost asleep still."

"Get up, boys, get up," I cried in a loud voice; "don't be lazy. You must never give way like this, you will lose both body and soul if you abandon yourselves to indolence in this way. You ought to be out of bed at the very first summons."

Fritz was the first to bestir himself, and Ernest was the last; he left his bed with great reluctance. I reprimanded him for so doing, saying—

"Are you not ashamed of yourself, my good lad, to allow yourself to be so captivated by sleep; why even little Frank is up before you?"

"Oh, it is so pleasant," he said, "when one is half awake just to have another snooze. I wish I could be awakened like this every day, and allowed to have another nap, and stretch my legs a little."

"That is a way of enjoying sleep the like of which I never before heard; but if you give yourself up to it in this manner you will never be anything but an undecided character, and run a great risk of becoming vicious, but this is not the time to read you a lecture on the subject. Let us be quick and have breakfast and return to the raft."

So after having joined in morning prayer and eaten our breakfast, we returned to the sea-shore. We made two trips with the sledge, to the great disgust of the donkey, who did not appear to enter into the spirit of the task. I afterwards thought of profiting by the flood tide to take back the boats to Safety Bay, and my wife and three youngest sons returned to Falcon's Nest; Jack and Fritz I took with me. The weather was so beautiful and the sea so calm that I was strongly tempted to make another visit to the wreck. The ordinary current would soon carry us there, but I warned my sons we must not stay very long, for fear of making their mother anxious. We took all we could carry, and without any very great trouble. Jack jumped and climbed about the ship looking for what he could most easily take away. At last he discovered a wheelbarrow, at which he was delighted, pushing it before him with a great noise, and crying out to me, "Nothing could be more useful to carry the potatoes in to Falcon's Nest."

But Fritz in his search had discovered something more useful than a wheelbarrow. He came to tell me that he had discovered a pinnacle, which had been taken to pieces and stowed away amongst the timber. I was so overjoyed with this news that I immediately went to satisfy myself that his tidings were correct. He was quite right, it was in fact a pinnacle with all its rigging, and even two small cannon for its defence. But I perceived that to put it together and to launch it would require more work, and probably more strength, than we were at that time able to bestow.

At any rate, this was not the time to undertake the task, as the day was declining, so I told my boys to place upon the raft any house

hold utensils which they thought would be useful. I put on board some tobacco graters, a cask of powder, another of flints, three wheel



barrows and wheels, and then we hoisted all the sails so as to reach the shore before the land wind began to blow, as it always does in the evening in those regions,

As we were approaching the shore we were astonished to perceive a whole line of strange beings ranged in single file on the beach, and apparently looking at us most attentively. They appeared like little men clothed in black and white dresses, with long necks. Some times they seemed to be extending their arms towards us, at other times they remained perfectly motionless.

"I really think," I exclaimed, "that we must be living in a land of pigmies, and that they have collected on the shore to welcome us."

"No, papa," said Jack, "I think they are Lilliputians."

His brother interrupted him with a laugh, and quizzed him for believing in such imaginary beings; but I reconciled the boys by simply stating that after all they might be nothing more than monkeys. But Fritz demolished this argument by making me observe that what we had taken for arms really now bore a much greater resemblance to large wings.

"I believe you are right," I said. "These are penguins, and they appear quite ready to oppose our landing, for they do not seem in the least afraid of us."

As soon as we were ready to disembark, Jack jumped ashore and laid about him right and left amongst the penguins. Five or six fell, and the remainder fled, to Fritz's great disgust, and he took his brother sharply to task for having frightened the birds away before he had had the opportunity of a shot at them. He was really very angry, but I took the liberty of turning the whole thing into ridicule, and he soon was appeased.

Jack in his turn received a reprimand for having jumped ashore so impetuously, and for killing the penguins, which were very stupid birds; but some of them turned out to be only stunned, so I tied their legs together and laid them down on the sand while we unloaded the raft.

The evening was now approaching, and we had not time to finish our work, so were obliged each of us to take a wheelbarrow full of the things most easy to move. I did not forget the tobacco graters, nor the iron plates, nor Jack's penguins. Thus laden we started for Falcon's Nest.

The two dogs were the first to perceive us, and came bounding joyfully to meet us. Poor little Jack was somewhat disagreeably impressed by their attentions, for in their bounds and caresses they overturned both him and his barrow, and the blows of his little hands, which he distributed freely, were scarcely felt by them, and had no other effect than to provoke shouts of laughter from the spectators.

My good wife was delighted to see the wheelbarrows and their contents; but when she came to the tobacco graters and the iron plates she shrugged her shoulders somewhat disdainfully. To this I only replied with a smile, as I was quite sure that I could prove the utility of these articles which she despised.

The penguins I decided should be placed for some days with the ducks and geese, and I took care that they should not stray far, by attaching each of them by the leg to one of the domestic fowls.

By these means I prevented them from flying away, and it appeared to me the best way of taming them; but it must be confessed that at first none of the parties concerned seemed to appreciate it. The poor inhabitants of the poultry yard thus attached to the new comers wore an aspect of surprise and astonishment most ludicrous to perceive.

My wife showed me a capital store of potatoes which she had collected while I was away, and also quite a quantity of the roots which Ernest had discovered on the previous day, and which I had decided



THE PENGUIN.

to be yams. Little Frank, noticing the satisfied manner in which I looked at them, cried out joyfully,—

“What will you say, I wonder, when you see a beautiful field of maize, pumpkins, and melons?”

“How is that?” I said; “what do you mean?”

“Oh, you little traitor,” said my wife, “you have betrayed me; I sowed some of these things in the trenches from which we dug the potatoes, and I was promising myself a great treat when I should see your surprise at their growth.”

“Well,” I replied, “even if the surprise came a little sooner, it is none the less a surprise, nor less agreeable, so forgive Frank his indiscretion on this occasion, and let us get supper.”

As we sat at our meal I informed my wife of the discovery we had made of the pinnace, but she did not appear particularly delighted.

"Now," she said, "you will be always going over to the wreck. Certainly, if the pinnace were once launched I should prefer your sailing about in it than in that tub boat of yours as you do at present. But I should very much like to know what ever be the use of these tobacco graters which you seem to set so much store by. Surely you cannot intend to make our boys regular smokers, and compel us to pass our lives in a thick unpleasant atmosphere of tobacco smoke."

"Assuredly not, my dear," I said; "I had a very different object in bringing these things to shore. I wish to teach my boys a very useful accomplishment, in which I am not very expert myself, but we can all serve our apprenticeship to it together. I mean the trade of baker. We have for such a long time eaten biscuits and potatoes that we ought really to think of making bread as a substitute."

"No doubt," she replied, "but I do not yet understand where you will find the flour, nor of what use these graters will be in the preparation of your bread."

"We have plenty of flour here," I said, showing her the roots of the manioc. "The iron plates which I have brought from the wreck will serve as an oven, the tobacco graters for a mill, and to-morrow we will set about the execution of our project, for it is time now that we retired for the night."

Next morning at daybreak the boys were all awake, and I began by explaining to my attentive auditory the properties of the yam and the uses to which the savages put it. I told them that there were three known species of this plant, of which two were poisonous, but that nevertheless the natives were accustomed to prefer these because they were more easily ground and yielded a more excellent flour.

"What, papa," exclaimed Jack, "are you going to teach us to make poisonous bread? I am very much obliged to you, certainly, but I shall not touch it, I can assure you. I wish we only knew what species of roots those are which we have got here."

"They appear to me to be of the poisonous species," I replied; "but I assure you we run no risk. All the unwholesome part of the plant is in the juice, and this we shall get rid of by pressure; there will then remain only the nutritious portion. But I am willing to adopt another precaution. I will give our bread first to the monkey and to our fowls as an experiment, and they shall run the risk, if there be any."

Jack was still rather discontented at the prospect of his ape being experimentally poisoned, although it was for the common weal; but he nevertheless took his part in the bread-making with the rest.

I asked my wife to prepare me a bag of strong canvas, and I dis-

tributed the tobacco scrapers amongst the boys, and when the roots had been thoroughly softened in water I desired them to begin to scrape them. This was very hard work ; but they entered upon it with great ardour, so much so, that in a very short time we had quite a quantity of the flour, which very much resembled sawdust. The boys did not cease to ask jokingly if I really thought that this radish bread would be eatable, and their mother, entering into their fun, had placed upon the



fire an immense dish of potatoes, so that in any case we should not be without dinner.

In no way deterred, however, by all this, I told the young workmen to stop as soon as I thought they had scraped sufficient flour. After having placed it in the sack, I proceeded immediately to squeeze it. For that purpose two or three planks were fastened below one of the roots of the fig-tree. The sack was placed upon them and covered with

another plank, upon which I fixed a beam, one end of which was fastened to the tree while to the other end I suspended the heaviest objects I could find, such as stones, iron bars, lead, etc., until I weighed it quite down to the ground. We then had the happiness to see the juice exuding from the bag in large drops. The children uttered cries of astonishment.

"This is nothing very wonderful," I said; "it is merely the effect of the power of leverage."

"I believed," said Ernest, "that the lever was only useful to raise heavy weights or to displace large masses."

"You must understand, my boy," I said, "that pressure is but a natural consequence of these attributes; for while the lever can raise or displace a weight, it must have a fulcrum, upon which it acts in direct ratio to the weight it is intended to move. Savages, who are not acquainted with the power of the lever, have another way of preparing the manioc. They enclose it in long, narrow bark baskets. By filling these the bark distends. Then they suspend their baskets from the branches of the tree and, attaching to them heavy stones, they compel them to resume their original shape."

"And is it possible," said my wife, "that by these means they can extract any appreciable quantity of the juice?"

"Oh yes," I said, "they cook it to extract its venomous properties, and prepare it by mixing it with pepper and crab-spawn. It is one of their most esteemed dishes. Europeans do not eat it, but they have it packed in earthen vessels and extract from the deposit a very fine starch."

"But, father," said Fritz, "it appears to me that we can now begin to make the bread. There is not a drop of juice remaining, and the flour in the bag is perfectly dry."

"Let us go to work then, boys, and set about it vigorously."

The bag was taken from the tree, and emptied of its contents, which we spread about so as to dry the sooner. I then made, by mixing the flour with a little water, a sort of biscuit, which I put upon one of our iron plates over a clear fire, and as my biscuit was cooking it gave forth a most appetizing odour.

"Oh," said Ernest, "how good that smells; what a pity it is that we must not eat such nice fresh bread as that is."

"For my part," said Jack, "I ask for nothing better, and I believe that Frank is of my opinion."

"I think so, also," I said, "and you are two of the greatest stupid I know; for it was master Jack himself who, scarcely an hour ago, was crying out against the imprudence of tasting the manioc bread. I am quite certain, however, that we might at this moment eat it without any

danger whatever. Nevertheless, it appears to me more prudent to wait till to-morrow, until we have seen the effect it has upon our lively young friend here, the monkey, and upon the quiet fowls."

The cake was then taken from the fire, smoking and smelling very good indeed, and the children resigned it somewhat regretfully to the inhabitants of the farmyard. My wife then served up the potatoes she had prepared, and we made an excellent dinner.

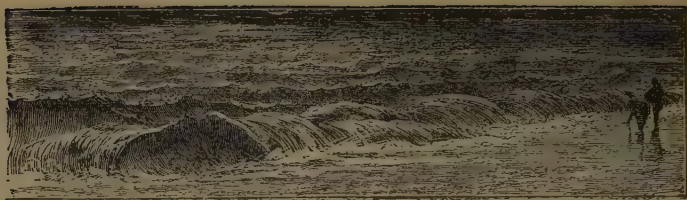
The conversation naturally turned upon our new discovery. I reminded my boys that the bread of manioc was called cassava, and I took occasion to speak to them concerning the most redoubtable poisons, their terrible effects, and the remedies which may be successfully employed against them.

"There is one," I said, "which we very likely may find on this shore; it is the fruit of the Manchineel-tree, which is all the more dangerous as its form and colour are most attractive, like a beautiful golden apple. Some animals can eat it without any fatal effects, but to man it is death. So take care, I added, that you are not tempted to taste it, however pretty and attractive it may appear to you. But when you find any fruits with which you are not acquainted, bring them to me, so that I may assure myself of their nature and properties."

After dinner we proceeded to visit the fowls and the monkey. They all seemed perfectly well, and the cassava bread did not appear to have had any other effect upon the latter save to make him more active than ever.

"Let us set to work once more," I said, and we resumed in great haste, this time quite happily, the work of baking. We were all of opinion that it was necessary that we should taste the result of our labour that evening. I was quite sure of being obeyed immediately. The boys prepared the iron plates once more, and some cocoa nuts. A capital fire was soon lighted. We made a greater quantity of bread this time than before, and kneaded it with the cocoa-nut milk. It is true that here and there some of the cakes were not quite done, but the ape, the penguins, and the fowls were all ready to devour what we did not require. At length we began in our turn to regale ourselves upon our new bread. The rest of the day we employed in bringing up from the shore in our barrow some articles which had been left behind in the boat.





CHAPTER XVI.

To the Wreck again.—Building up the Pinnacle.—Blowing a Hole in the Ship.—The Explosion.—The Pinnacle Launched.—My Wife's Kitchen Garden.—Return to Falcon's Nest.



MEANWHILE my mind was occupied with one idea, which I could not get rid of. This was to return to the wreck, inspect the pinnacle, and ascertain if it were not possible to get possession of it, for it ran the risk of being engulfed, with the ship, should a storm arise.

But before I could put my plans in execution I was obliged to subdue the fears of my wife, who was always very anxious when we returned to the wreck in our primitive boat; and this time it was necessary that I should take the three eldest boys with me, for I should need all the assistance I could command to carry out my idea.

At length she consented, as I promised to return the same evening. We left home well provided with cassava bread and potatoes, and carrying our swimming jackets, in case of necessity. When we arrived at the wreck we immediately set about loading our boat with useful articles nearest to hand, as we did not wish to return to Falcon's Nest altogether empty-handed, and so made sure of something.

I then examined the pinnacle, and noticed with pleasure that each part was numbered; and I fancied that I could, without much difficulty, put them together correctly. But another and more serious difficulty presented itself. How were we to get it out from amongst the planks and other things amongst which it was imbedded, and how could we launch it? The obstacles appeared to me, at first, insurmountable. I considered them from all points of view, but I could not find any expedient; and while the boys ran and jumped about the ship, careless and joyous as ever, I seated myself close to the pinnacle, and with my head supported by my hands, I sought the solution of the problem

which it was so important that we should solve ; for what a difference there was between this pretty skiff, so strong, and at the same time so easy to manage, and our boat of tubs, into which we scarcely dared to enter without putting on our swimming jackets !

At length, tired of pursuing an idea which always managed to escape me, in despair, I set about cutting away with the saw and hatchet the planks which surrounded this treasure, trusting to Providence to show me a way out of my difficulty.

But evening fell before my work was very far advanced, and as we returned to shore we made up our minds to begin again very early in the morning. As we landed we were most agreeably surprised ; we were accosted on the beach by my wife and little Frank.

“ Why have you quitted Falcon’s Nest ? ” I asked.

“ Because,” replied my wife, “ as long as you remain on the wreck we like to be as near to you as possible. We like to be able to see what you are about when you are risking your lives upon the sea, and to meet you again as soon as possible on your return ; so we think it much better to stay at Zeltheim on these occasions than to remain at Falcon’s Nest.”

These words touched me deeply, and I did not know how to thank my good wife for her kind thoughtfulness and attention, particularly as I knew how much she preferred Falcon’s Nest to Zeltheim.

We disembarked everything that we had brought from the wreck, which included two casks of salt butter, three of flour, some rice, and a number of other objects useful for the household, which she valued above all others.

Next morning early we returned again to the wreck, and for a whole week we proceeded thither every day and worked hard after breakfast until dinner-time. My wife began to get accustomed at last to our excursions, and saw us depart without uneasiness, and she would choose the periods of our absence to make her own expedition to Falcon’s Nest, whither the care of the poultry-yard often led her. In the evenings we all assembled together again, and our pleasant suppers were enlivened by the recital of our various employments during the day, and after these happy moments and the calm sleep which followed, we felt quite refreshed by the morning.

By the end of the week the pinnacle was put together ; she was half decked, light, and of pretty “ lines.” We could already foresee that she would prove a good sailer, for she did not draw much water. We caulked and pitched over all the seams, and two small cannon on the after-deck were fastened with chains as they are on large vessels. We could scarcely take our eyes from our pretty little boat, which we could almost pronounce to be our own work. Here she was, all ready to be launched,

and impatient to carry her light masts and spreading sails on the undulating surface of the sea ; but meanwhile we could discover no means of giving her her liberty.

It is true, I sought for the means of extricating her from her position with the greatest ardour, for now it appeared to me intolerable that so much labour and trouble should be thrown away. I looked at the surroundings, the long thick planks which it was utter folly to think could be broken through by our unassisted arms, so as to make a sufficient opening for the pinnace. Besides, a tempest might arise while we were occupied in getting her out, and the ship, the pinnace, the workmen, would be all engulfed.



At length I conceived a project, a dangerous one it is true, and which promised about equal chances of success and failure. I said nothing about it to my children, and I went secretly in search of an old iron mortar which I had seen.

I then took a thick oak plank, to which I attached iron holdfasts. I now made a groove in this plank with a knife ; in this groove I fastened a slow match, long enough to burn for two hours. I filled the mortar

with powder, covered it with the plank, and fastened it to the trunnions of the mortar with the iron hooks. I stopped up the holes with pitch, and secured the machine with iron chains. By these means I obtained a species of petard, or infernal machine. I suspended it to the ship's side in the neighbourhood of the pinnacle, after having calculated as nearly as I could the effect of the explosion in such a manner that the pinnacle should suffer least. When all was ready, I ordered my boys to embark in the tub boat, then I lighted the slow-match, and we left the wreck. None of them were aware of what I had done, and had no expectation of what would follow.

We disembarked as usual at Zeltheim, and began to discharge our cargo. Suddenly a terrific explosion was heard, which was echoed in thunder from the neighbouring rocks. My wife and children, much astonished, suspended their various avocations.

"What can that be, father?" cried the boys. "Did you hear it? It sounded like the report of a cannon. Perhaps it is the captain and the sailors who were lost!"

"Or, perhaps," added Fritz, "it is another vessel in distress. Let us hasten to their assistance."

"I think," said my wife, "that the explosion came from our own shipwrecked vessel; perhaps you left something burning, and the powder on board has blown up!"

I apparently assented to this opinion,—

"But," I said, "why should we not go out and assure ourselves of the fact on the spot? Now, who will go?"

"We all will," exclaimed the boys, and immediately jumped into the boat.

I merely tarried behind a moment or two to speak a few words of explanation to my wife, and joined them.

We quickly pulled out—never had rowers worked with greater ardour. As soon as we came in view of the vessel I was delighted to perceive that no damage had been done to the near side, and that there was no smoke or fire visible, while the sea was covered with the *débris*. We pulled round the vessel, and found ourselves before an immense aperture, when to my satisfaction I perceived the pinnacle perfectly unharmed, and only thrown over on its side, quite open to our view.

"She is ours," I cried, pointing her out to my astonished children; "the beautiful pinnacle is ours at last. It will now be an easy matter to launch her, and we need not delay to do so."

"Oh!" said Fritz, "now I understand all about it. It is you, father, who caused all that explosion to disengage the pinnacle; but what sort of a machine did you use to obtain such a result?"

I explained to him the means I had employed, and gave him some

idea of the power of petards. Then, with the assistance of a crank and levers, we succeeded in getting her close to the edge. I had taken the precaution to fasten a strong cable to the pinnacle to prevent her getting out of our reach. Thanks to these measures and to our united efforts the little vessel very soon plunged into the sea, and then having moored her safely alongside, we returned to Zeltheim.

The next day I endeavoured to recall all I knew of the art of rigging a ship, and set about providing masts and sails. This work, in which the boys assisted me with all their power, occupied two days. Then, when nothing was wanting for her equipment, we loaded her from the wreck, and taking our unassuming boat of tubs in tow, prepared to sail home.

It is difficult for me to describe the delight of my sons. A vessel armed with two cannons appeared to them invincible, and they began to wish for the appearance of a fleet of native canoes that we might have the pleasure of bombarding them and sending them to the bottom.

I somewhat cooled their martial ardour, and insisted that, far from wishing for an attack by savages, we ought to be very thankful to Providence for having hitherto preserved us from such a thing. "But," I added, "these arms which I hope we may never have cause to use against enemies will enhance the surprise we are preparing for your mother. Would it not be in some sort a reward for your trouble to give her a royal salute from our guns as we approach Zeltheim? So, Fritz, I appoint you captain of the frigate. Take your place on the poop from whence at the proper time you can give the word of command. Now Jack, do you take charge of one cannon, Ernest of the other, while I will take the place of steersman."

A cry of delight signalled our departure; the wind was favourable and the pinnacle glided over the water like a bird. We soon entered Safety Bay, and perceived the shores of Zeltheim.

"Number one, fire; number two, fire;" exclaimed Fritz; "and at the word of command Jack and Ernest respectively discharged the pieces. The rocks echoed to the detonations far and wide. Captain Fritz at the same time fired his two pistols.

As we were so near land we could perceive the signs of astonishment and emotion at our appearance which my wife betrayed. Little Frank, with wide-opened eyes, appeared quite stupefied, and did not know whether to be glad or alarmed at what he saw and heard.

"You are very welcome," cried my wife, "for in truth I have a 'bone to pick' with you all for the terrible fright you have given me. I had no idea that you would become masters of the pinnacle; and as soon as I perceived the boat sailing amongst the rocks I did not know what to think. Then, as if that was not enough, I saw a thick

smoke arising all at once and then that most alarming report. But I forgive you as you have brought such a pretty little vessel with you. For the future I shall be less alarmed to see you go out, and perhaps I may occasionally accompany you myself."

Fritz was so importunate, however, that his mother consented to embark on the spot. When she had examined the pinnace she extolled our courage and perseverance to the skies.

"This is all really very good indeed," she said at length, "but you must not imagine that Frank and I have been idle while you have been doing so much. By no means. Our work, although modest, is equally deserving of praise, and if we are not able to announce the success so pompously as you have done with cannon, the result will not be the less welcome when it makes its appearance at the dinner-table."

I asked her to explain the riddle.

"Follow me," she said, "in this direction." So saying she led us to the cascade of the Jackal River. There we perceived, under the shade of the rocks, a beautiful little kitchen-garden laid out, divided into beds by planks, which formed little paths between them. "There," she said, "that has been my work and Frank's. I have planted potatoes, a fresh supply of manioc roots and lettuces on this side. I have reserved a spot farther off for you to plant canes in. Other beds are prepared to receive melons, peas, cabbages, beans, and all other treasures of this nature which we can procure from the wreck. I have already taken the precaution to sow some maize; as it grows high and thick it will preserve the young plants from the great heat of the sun."

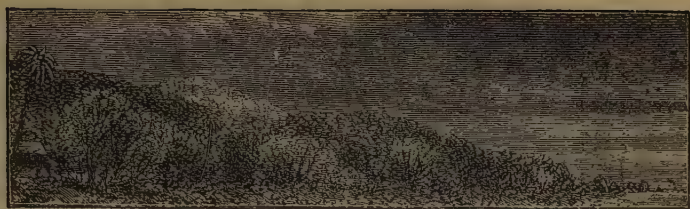
"Have you indeed accomplished all this?" I said; "you have done astonishing work. I scarcely could have believed that you and Frank would have been able to do so much in such a short time. I cannot sufficiently praise the discretion with which Frank has kept his mother's secret."

"Oh, I have had some trouble about that," said my wife; "for to tell you the truth, when I commenced I did not expect to succeed, and I did not wish, if I were not able to accomplish it, to let you see my failure. The desire to surprise you, so much the more lively as I suspected some little plot on your part, gave me more strength than I thought I possessed."

I praised my excellent wife more and more, and we took our way back to the tent. This day has been one of the happiest we have yet had. As we retraced our steps I took the opportunity to point out to my sons that the conscientious worker will always reap the benefit of his labour, and there were no enjoyments more pure than those which one possesses during a life of usefulness

My wife, who had only once visited Falcon's Nest for ten days, strongly advocated my going there to look after the European plants, which would be in danger of perishing if neglected too long. I promised to attend to them the next day, and it was arranged we should all go back to Falcon's Nest at the same time. Then, having unloaded the pinnace, and fastened it carefully for the night, we took up such portions of the cargo as we could most easily carry, and wended our way to our original and dearly-loved abode.





CHAPTER XVII.

Our Second Sunday.—The Lasso.—A Supply of Calabashes wanted.—Our Expedition.—The Hen Bustard.—A Shower of Cocoa Nuts.—The Land-crab.—Calabash Wood.—The Wild Boar proves to be the Old Sow.—The Iguana.—Music hath Charms.—Return to Falcon's Nest.



THE first Sunday of our sojourn on the island had been spent at Zeltheim, and, notwithstanding our occupations on board the ship, we had not omitted to celebrate it. We were no less particular as to the second, which arrived the day after that on which we had once more taken up our abode at Falcon's Nest. It was marked by prayer, by reading the gospel, and by a parable of the adventures of an Arab wandering in a vast desert with his faithful and devoted wife. A good genius watched over the poor wanderers, and brought them a talisman, by the aid of which they were able to triumph over all obstacles and to surmount all troubles of whatever nature.

The sense of the parable was easily understood by the four children, who recognised in the good genius their mother, whose care had preserved our precious Bible from the wreck.

I have always thought that it is good to introduce the greatest possible variety into the lives of children, that we ought to seek to make agreeable to them what we wish them to become attached to, and so to make a rule never to fatigue them even by the inculcation of the best principles and the wisest teachings. Morality and religion do not exclude innocent pleasure, and their influence ought to be gained more by persuasion than by compulsion.

When we had dined I permitted my children to resume their games; but as I thought it good to develop their strength and skill, I wished to direct their amusements with this object. I reminded them of the gymnastic exercises which had occupied our first Sunday, shooting with bows and arrows, leaping and running, etc. They all declared they

would ask for nothing better than to resume them. Ernest alone appeared a little less anxious about it than the others, for to stimulate him to exertion it was necessary that the game should have some appearance of novelty.

It occurred to me to teach them something which they had not hitherto attempted, and it appeared to me that in the situation in which they were placed they could never become too agile and robust.

Since, as I thought, they might be destined to pass their lives in this half-savage manner, they ought to possess the advantages of savages, and train the muscles for strength and agility, that they may know how to cross even torrents, and to fight against the most ferocious animals.

So I asked for two bullets, and attached one to each end of a cord about twelve feet in length.

"There," I said, "is a weapon of which you have not had any previous knowledge. The Patagonians, who inhabit the southern portion of South America, are the inventors of it. As they do not possess either powder or bullets, they use stones. They throw this species of sling round the animals they wish to attack, and the manner in which the two weights at the ends return towards each other, causes the part on which the cord strikes to be firmly clasped by it."

This novelty excited great curiosity amongst the boys. They most carefully examined the weapon; then it was of course necessary that I must give them an example of its power, whether I would or not. By good fortune I succeeded to a miracle; and by chance, for I will not say by skill, I was lucky enough to strike the stem of an arbutus which was at some little distance, and which I had selected for my first experiment.

The success of the Patagonian sling was immediately assured; each of the boys wished for one of his own. I hastily made three like the first, and the practice commenced. I had called their attention to the fact that this resource would supersede the use of fire-arms when ammunition began to run short, and this suggestion redoubled the ardour of the younger slingers. But Fritz excelled all the rest; he soon became a past master in the game. Indeed, as a rule he showed himself the most expert of them all; for he was naturally the strongest in body and the most intelligent.

On the following morning, when I got up I perceived that the sea was very rough, the wind was blowing hard, and the waves were dashing noisily upon the beach. It was, however, not sufficiently bad to alarm any real sailors; but our inexperience suggested that it would be more prudent not to brave its fury, and I congratulated myself that we had gone to Falcon's Nest, and had made up our minds to devote this day to the peaceful enjoyments of husbandry.

I then announced to my wife that we would not leave home during

the day; that I would give up to her the direction of our work and put myself entirely under her orders. She began by showing me all that she had done, and how during our absence she had improved our dwelling-place. In the first place there were the ortolans she had caught in a trap set in the branches of the fig-tree. She had half-roasted them, wrapped them in butter, and packed them away in a cask. Farther off our pigeons were peacefully roosting under the leaves. We then arrived at the fruit trees, and I saw that it was time I took them in hand, for they were half withered.

It was therefore resolved that we should occupy ourselves in remedying the evil, and that we should subsequently go into the calabash wood to renew our supply of vessels. We set about planting our small trees and watering them, and the desire to see a place so long abandoned was so great that we had finished our work sooner than we had expected. Nevertheless the day was too far advanced to set out on an expedition; for, as this time my wife and Frank did not wish to remain behind at Falcon's Nest, there were so many preparations to make, and so many precautions to be taken, that the evening surprised us before we had finished our work.

At daybreak next morning we were all astir, and our arrangements were completed in a short space of time.

We started in good spirits, skirting Flamingo Marsh. 'The ass was



SAVAGES' WEAPONS.

attached to the sledge on which our provisions for the day and our ammunition were placed. Turk as usual, arrayed in his coat of mail, led the party. After him came the boys heavily armed; my wife and I formed the rear guard, followed by Bill, who was somewhat embarrassed by his rider the ape.

We soon reached a fertile country beyond the marsh, and my wife, and the younger ones who had never seen it before, had no bounds to their admiration. Fritz, who burned to distinguish himself as a sportsman, went on ahead with Turk, and very soon disappeared from our view. Before long the dog disturbed a very large bird which he pursued with loud barking, Fritz brought his gun to his shoulder, fired, and the bird fell heavily to the ground. But it was by no means dead, and began to run across the sands at a tremendous pace. Turk pursued it at full speed, barking furiously. Fritz cried out to me, and hurried after him as quickly as possible. Bill, having seen all that was going on, threw his rider and took a short cut to join in the hunt and to take the fugitive on the flank. Fritz came up and the bird was caught, but gave a great deal more trouble to secure than the flamingo. It was of large size and very strong, had enormous feet with which it bestowed some very heavy blows whenever the dogs approached.

Fritz went round and round the combatants in despair, and did not dare to approach; for even Turk, who had boldly thrown himself upon the enemy, had been so warmly received that he did not wish to attack at close quarters. They were therefore obliged to wait until I came up, and as I had to force my way through very high grass, and besides was very heavily laden, I could not reach the spot as quickly as I desired. But when I arrived, what was my delight to perceive a magnificent female great bustard. In order to secure without killing the bird, I took my handkerchief from my pocket, and seizing my opportunity I enveloped its head so successfully, that it was quite unable to escape. I then secured its very formidable feet, bound its wings close to its sides, and it was our prisoner. This was a great acquisition, with which I proposed to increase our poultry yard, which was constantly in my mind. Without delay we carried our prize to the others, who were impatiently waiting our return. Ernest and Jack ran up crying out, "It is splendid, it is splendid!"

"Papa," asked Ernest, "is it not a goose?"

"Oh! a goose," said Fritz, laughing; "where are its webbed feet?"

"You can say what you please," I remarked, "but Ernest is not far wrong, and your quizzing, as is often the case, only betrays your ignorance. The hen bustards are called goose bustards, although they have not got the webbed feet of the goose."

"Ah," said Jack, "it is perhaps the very same hen bustard that we

started once before, and which we could not hit. You remember, mamma, don't you?"

"That would be so much the worse," replied my wife; "for the young ones would thus be deprived of their mother, and in that case my advice would be to let it go again."

"No," said I, "I cannot agree with you. If the wound is dangerous and we set the bird at liberty, it will die, and we shall be deprived of a most excellent repast. If, on the contrary, we can cure it, we will do so, and it will prove a very nice addition to our farm-yard. As for the little



ones you are so anxious about, you may make your mind easy, for in the space of three weeks or more, since you were here, they have no doubt grown big enough to shift for themselves."

While this discussion was proceeding I placed the bustard upon the sledge, and we continued our route towards Monkey Wood, which was so named on account of the tragi-comical adventure which had happened to Fritz; and his mother and brothers were anxious to see the wood.

Ernest very soon wandered away from the rest of us, and seized with

admiration at the sight of the magnificent trees sat down at the foot of a cocoa-nut tree somewhat apart, and contemplated it with a meditative air as he perceived what splendid cocoa nuts it bore. He was then more delighted than ever. I advanced quietly behind him without his perceiving it, and was amused with the expression of his countenance.

At length he heaved a deep sigh, and said, "It is terribly high."

"Yes," I said; "it is very high, and the cocoa nuts smile at us so agreeably that it makes us quite discontented. If they would only fall into our mouths with their own accord, eh!"

"I do not care so much about that," said Ernest; "I am quite sure they would break my teeth."

He had scarcely uttered these words when a magnificent nut fell to the ground at his feet, and while Ernest was a little disturbed and involuntarily drew back a pace, another nut followed the first so closely that it provoked my astonishment.

"It is like a fairy tale," said the lad; "scarcely has one uttered a wish before it is accomplished."

"I have very little doubt," I replied, "that the magician who has complied with your desires in such an *apropos* manner is neither more nor less than a monkey sitting up in the tree."

Then Ernest picked up the two cocoa nuts; they were not quite ripe, and I could not imagine why they had fallen from the tree. So Ernest and I stood together under the tree and looked up to try to discover the being who had sent us the fruit mysteriously. But we could see nothing except an occasional moving of the leaves, and as we could descry neither bird nor monkey, we attributed the fall of the nuts to the wind, although we could not feel the least breeze where we stood. Fritz, who came up to tell us once more his adventure with the monkeys, having remarked our absence, arrived with his mother and the other boys, and seeing us so occupied in staring into the tree was delighted to think there was something for him to shoot.

After an explanation, we were divided in opinion as to the cause of the fall of nuts, and each one offered to make an attempt to discover the object of our regard. As we were speaking two more nuts, to our great astonishment, fell at our feet.

"He is at any rate a very polite and intelligent sorcerer, for treating us in this manner; before we have even broken the first supply he has sent us two more. He has, no doubt, perceived that the number of mouths is increased, and he proportions his gifts to the party. That is quite right, and we ought to thank him for his good nature."

"Yes," said Jack; "the sorcerer does things very well; and if he would only send me and Ernest two or three big nuts, we would drink his health with the greatest pleasure, and shout, 'long live the sorcerer.'"

"Oh, I see him, I see him!" cried Fritz suddenly. "Look, papa! what a horrid fellow he is. As big as the top of my hat, and armed with two enormous claws like a crab. There he is descending the tree."

At this intelligence little Frank quickly ran to his mother for protection. Ernest looked round him to see in which direction he would be safest. Jack seized his gun with a threatening air, and everybody looked towards the tree with anxiety to see what strange animal it was and how he made his appearance.



The animal allowed himself to slide gently down the trunk of the tree to the ground. When he had reached the bottom, Jack advanced to strike him with the butt of his gun, but he missed his aim, and fell to the ground. The animal then with outstretched claws made straight for the aggressor. The little fellow defended himself courageously, but with such haste that none of his blows took effect, as the animal managed to avoid them with singular dexterity; and I saw that my son would very soon become exhausted. However I did not wish to interrupt the combat, because I now perceived that the animal was a species of crab, and I knew that it could not harm the boy if he defended himself with even a moderate amount of skill.

At length, fatigued with his useless efforts, and probably recollecting the circumstance of his having been bitten by the other crab, Jack fairly turned and fled. His brothers set up a shout of laughter, and quizzed him tremendously. So taking courage, he returned, put down his game bag and his gun, took off his coat, and holding it in both hands advanced cautiously once more towards his antagonist. He then suddenly threw his coat over the animal, rolled it round, and grasped it with all his strength.

"I congratulate you, my little hero," I said; "you have gained the victory at last."

I then advanced, and seizing my hatchet gave the animal some heavy blows. Under the impression that this vigorous treatment had killed it, I took off the coat which Jack had wrapped it in, and had the pleasure of perceiving that it was dead, although in fact it wore a more threatening aspect than ever. It was one of the largest species of land crabs.

We placed our victim and two cocoa nuts on our sledge, the two other nuts I cracked, and we enjoyed the milk as we continued our advance.

But it was often very difficult to proceed, as we were much impeded by the long grass and undergrowth. Every moment we were obliged to cut a way with the hatchets for the ass and his load; but before long we made an agreeable discovery, at least for our future expeditions, and which came very opportunely in consequence of the great heat from which we suffered. As Ernest was cutting some of the thick undergrowth at the foot of the trees, which so often barred our passage, he remarked that pure water escaped from the end of the tube which he had cut. He immediately showed it to us, and began to drink it with avidity.

I cut some more, and making large incisions, the air penetrated into the tube, and the water ran out so abundantly that we filled the cocoa-nut shells and had sufficient for all.

"You see, my children," I said, "with what treasures Heaven has supplied us. How delicious this liquor must be to men travelling beneath a broiling sun, or in the midst of deserts, when they often have to march for whole days without meeting a spring."

All the children in turn wished to make use of this new species of fountain, and they sucked out the roots without obtaining the refreshment they desired, for the water came but slowly, and they were already beginning to complain when I showed them in what places to make the incisions, so that the air would enter the tube and drive the liquor out.

After having proceeded some time through the wood, we arrived at last at a clear space, whence we could see, at some little distance before

us, the magnificent calabash trees which were the object of our expedition.

Everybody was much astonished at the sight of these beautiful trees and the curious fruit they bore. Fritz explained to his mother and brothers all that I have already set down respecting our first passage through the wood, and I noticed with pleasure that he had profited by the advice I had given him on that occasion.

While he was thus engaged in his recital, I made choice of the best calabashes, and fashioned them into the various forms of vessels of which we had most need, and at the same time I took care to assure myself that our monkey friends were not in the neighbourhood, for I was afraid lest they should interrupt us in our work.

I perceived with pleasure that there was no trace of any of these animals in the neighbourhood, and I proceeded joyously to join my family. I saw that Fritz and Jack were occupied in collecting dry sticks and some pebbles, while my wife was tending the bustard; and, having examined its wounds, she informed me that she did not think them dangerous. She thought it was rather cruel to leave the poor animal tied down upon the sledge in that manner; so I contented myself with fastening it to a tree, so that it could roam about to the length of its tether. It very soon showed symptoms of becoming more tame, and was only frightened when the dogs approached it too closely; but it did not object to our society, from which fact I concluded that it had never yet seen men, and that consequently the island was uninhabited.

All this time Fritz, with Jack's assistance, had lighted a great fire, and they both appeared so busy that I could not help laughing and saying to them,—“This is a capital idea of yours, gentlemen, to light a fire when we are already nearly broiled with heat as it is. I should think that you must be a pair of salamanders, or like the inhabitants of the planet Mercury, of which they say that they are obliged to light a fire to cool themselves, as the sun is usually so very hot up there, and that heat we should think excessive is quite refreshing to them.”

“No, no,” said Jack; “all we want to do is to cook that old crab.”

“Ah, I see,” I replied, “you wish to make these stones red hot and throw them into a calabash saucepan to heat the water. I must congratulate you on your attempts to make yourself useful; but as a first step it would be better to find the vessel you require, not to mention the water.”

“But we have plenty of cooking utensils at home,” said my wife; “you had much better look out for some gourds to hold the milk, and make a scoop sufficiently long to reach the butter in the cask, and some spoons to eat our meals with properly, instead of troubling yourself about the crab.”

This advice was acted upon, and we all set about collecting the calabashes. A good many of them were dry enough to be made use of immediately; some were still too green, and as we could not do much with them we threw them away.

When we had collected a sufficient quantity, we commenced to make the articles we required, and fashioned them according to our views. I first made a nice little egg basket, then some jugs for the milk and cream, to which I adapted covers with the portion of the cocoa nut I had cut off. Then some cups to drink the water in from the spring in the stream, some spoons and porringers, some nests for our pigeons and chickens, and finally a hive for the bees which we had discovered in the cleft of a rock.

Our utensils were not of a very first-rate description, but they were passable; and when we had made a sufficient number for our immediate necessities, I allowed Fritz and Jack to prepare a saucepan to cook the crab in.

They promptly set about this, and only wanted one thing to complete their happiness. They had no water, and they begged me to assist them in finding them some in the wood. I consented, and Ernest very kindly offered to take part in the search, for he had not made a very good workman, and had broken nearly every calabash which he had touched. To endeavour to make up for his want of skill he now ran before us with the object of being the first to discover the water or some other useful thing. But scarcely had he left us when he uttered a loud cry and ran back to us in great consternation, exclaiming at the top of his voice,—

“A wild boar! a wild boar! Come quickly, papa, I am so terribly frightened. He jumped up close beside me, and has now run away into the wood, breaking it down all before him.”

“Come along, boys,” I said, “come along; but let us be careful, we shall perhaps get a magnificent prize.”

I called the dogs, which immediately joined us. Ernest served as a guide, and conducted us to the place where he had seen the wild boar which had frightened him so terribly. But we could perceive nothing beyond a small mound which had been recently torn up by the animal, and two dried apples which it had probably disinterred in its search for food.

Jack and Ernest amused themselves in discussing these signs, but did not go on farther, they left us to follow upon the trail of the animal with the dogs.

They very soon overtook him, and I was ready to fire, as we advanced, with all due precautions proper to be observed on such occasions. in the direction of the barking.

The spectacle we came in sight of, however, somewhat cooled our martial ardour. We came upon our dogs holding tightly, by the ears, a poor animal which was uttering terrible screams, and this animal was a no less formidable beast than our own old sow, which we had permitted to roam at large.

After a few seconds we both burst in a roar of laughter, and hurried up to release the poor thing from the unwelcome attentions of Bill and Turk. But as soon as our valiant followers, Ernest and Jack, heard the peal of laughter issuing from the thicket instead of the reports of our guns and the baying of the dogs, they hastened to our assistance, and were received by Fritz with a string of sarcastic congratulations, particularly addressed to Ernest on his having seen such an enormous wild boar.



We should I daresay have quizzed these heroes for a much longer period if our attention had not been directed to the old sow, which, released from the dogs, was busy turning up some more of the small apples we had previously noticed.

Fritz was afraid that they were the fruit of the manchineel tree against which I had warned him previously; but as the sow appeared to enjoy the apples very much, and if they were not good to eat I concluded that she would not devour them so greedily, I made up my mind that they were not the manchineel fruit; but as a matter of precaution I gave some to the monkey, which devoured them with great relish.

I also noticed that the dogs were beginning to eat the apples, or whatever they were, so I took courage, but I still adhered to my former determination not to eat anything new until we had put it to a sufficient test.

This was all very well, but as we were still in want of water, and beginning to experience the pangs of thirst, we were obliged to continue our search.

This time Jack took the lead, and ran in advance to the foot of a rock. But scarcely had he reached it than he recoiled in terror and shouted out,—

"Papa, papa, a crocodile, a crocodile!"

"Absurd!" I exclaimed. "A crocodile upon a dry rock in this neighbourhood, at such a distance from any water,—that would indeed be a marvel!"

"Well, I assure you there is one there. Fortunately it is fast asleep upon the stone. It is such an enormous fellow!"

This reiterated assurance excited my curiosity, and we all advanced towards the rock near which the monster was reposing. But immediately I caught sight of it I recognised it as one of those enormous lizards, called *iguanas*, which are considered rather a delicacy in the West Indies. I told this to the boys, and said that if we could secure the animal it would be a very acceptable present to bring back to our kind house-keeper.

I immediately proceeded to cut a strong switch, and to the end of this I fastened a running knot, and arming myself with a thick stick for my defence, I approached our prize softly. My children remained behind in motionless expectation.

As soon as I got within reach I commenced to whistle softly and gradually increased in loudness as I proceeded.

The animal at length awoke, and appeared so delighted with the music that he raised his head to listen the more intently, and perhaps to see whence it came.

I was obliged to approach the iguana very cautiously, so as not to alarm him. At length I got sufficiently near to pass the running noose over his head; but I continued whistling all the time without cessation. The melody held the animal apparently spell-bound, and he fell into a sort of ecstasy, for sometimes he would extend himself at full length, and sometimes coil up with apparent delight at the music.

At length I seized a favourable moment to tighten the noose, and with a strong pull I succeeded in dragging the animal to the base of the rock, and then turned him again upon his belly, so that I could the more easily kill him.

It is true that he saluted me with several heavy blows of his tail, and that I had need of all my presence of mind; but the boys came to my assistance, and we very quickly mastered the beast, although he defended himself very stoutly, and with one blow of his tail he laid the unsuspecting Jack flat upon the ground.

This resistance had irritated the whole party, and each one wished to finish him with a shot, but I stopped them. The animal was at bay; then I took the switch and thrust it into his open nostrils. A few drops of blood followed, and all signs of life quickly departed. But the formidable range of teeth which garnished the animal's jaws was sufficient to terrify the young hunters.

According to custom we set up a loud cheer.

Nevertheless this rich prize was a very considerable burden for me, for it was quite against my principles to abandon any game which we had succeeded in capturing; and as our sledge was so far away I was



obliged to hoist the iguana on my shoulder, while my boys sought to assist me, each in turn holding up the long tail behind.

I must confess that we formed a somewhat curious spectacle. I had something the air of an ancient king clad in purple robes, or rather perhaps I should say of a magician in state costume, while his pages carried his train as he advanced in all his majesty.

We had very nearly got back to our resting place when we heard cries of terror uttered by little Frank and his mother, to whom our lengthened absence had caused very considerable anxiety, because we had not fired a single shot as we usually did.

But as soon as we answered their cries, the tone of their voice changed

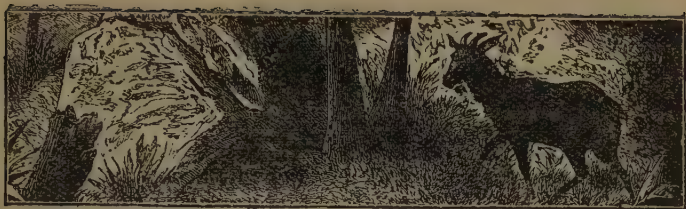
at once, and we were received with a shout of welcome. It was quite delightful to see the joyful expression of their faces as we drew near,—henceforth all trouble was forgotten.

Scarcely had we refreshed ourselves with a slight repast than my wife proposed that we should return to Falcon's Nest, as the day was already somewhat far advanced. I agreed to this proposal, but we found that it would be necessary to leave the sledge which my wife and Frank had laden with our utensils, because as it was so late we should be obliged to take a shorter way home than that by which we had come, and the sledge would not be able to pass by that route. The ass was accordingly laden with the iguana, with our youngest child and some calabashes. I directed my wife and Frank to fasten the bustard to a cord, so that we might let it run along with us without inconvenience.

All these preparations were soon completed, and the little caravan set forward in direct line for Falcon's Nest. When we reached the calabash trees we found the roots under which the sow had turned up the little red apples we had seen, and we took a number of them with us. We then struck into a majestic grove of oak trees, amongst which here and there rose a fig tree of the same species as those at Falcon's Nest, and the ground was covered with acorns. I could not prevent the children from tasting them, for as they were just like the acorns of their native land there did not appear to me to be any danger in it; but the resemblance was not perfect and the taste was very far from being the same.

We arrived at length without any further incident at our destination, and there was plenty of time to prepare supper, of which we stood in great need, before darkness fell.

My wife took the egg basket we had made and one of our new milk jugs, and hastened to make use of them in collecting the eggs, and milking the cow and the goats. Fritz was directed to make a ditch, which would serve for a cellar, and to cover it with foliage and surround it in such a way that the precious beverage the milk would keep quite fresh. Jack took a nest, mounted up into the tree, fastened it to a branch, put moss in it, and carefully placed within it a brooding pigeon, which appeared so comfortable there that she immediately began to coo her thanks. Ernest occupied himself in carrying a nest to a hen and placing it in the spot where the others were accustomed to lay, while I meantime skinned the iguana and cut off a tender morsel for our supper. The land crab furnished a second course for us, and we thus supped like princes, with an excellent appetite by way of sauce. We were not long at our meal, and after having arranged a sleeping place for the bustard near the flamingo to which we had attached it, we all hastened to seek in our lofty dormitory the sleep which very soon came upon us.



CHAPTER XVIII.

Another Excursion.—Jays.—The Canadian Grouse.—The Candleberry Tree.—A Bird Colony.—India-rubber Trees.—The Sago Palm.—Return Home.



THE next day I determined to go in search of the sledge and the utensils we had left behind us; and I set off with Fritz and the ass, desiring the other boys to remain near their mother. The reason I gave was only to cover my real object, which was to make an excursion along the chain of rocks and to endeavour to find out the boundary of the land on which we had been cast; for I did not wish that the timidity, or want of endurance of my wife and the younger boys, should hinder me in the execution of my design. We left Bill to protect the family at home, but Turk we took with us, and he testified his joy by his gambols. When we arrived at the Oak Wood we found our old sow, who was breakfasting much to her taste on the acorns we had noticed the previous day, and we wished her a good appetite. We had not been able to carry any of the acorns away with us the day before, but it was very agreeable to observe that the sow was considerably tamer than before, and did not run away from us like a wild beast. This we attributed to our having saved her from the dogs.

As we traversed the wood we collected a quantity of acorns, and as we marched noiselessly we discovered a number of birds eating them. They allowed us to approach near enough for Fritz to fire at them, and he knocked over a jay and two paraquets of the smallest species. The jay appeared to me to be the great tufted Virginian jay. As for the paraquets, one of them had magnificent red plumage, while the other was of a brilliant green.

While Fritz was reloading his gun we heard a curious noise at some little distance, which sounded like the beating of a muffled drum. Fritz was quite on the alert, for we at first thought it the war-note of a tribe of

savages, and we glided softly into a neighbouring thicket, in which we hid ourselves, and we were enabled to distinguish whence the noise came.

In an open space we perceived perched upon a half-dead tree a very beautiful bird about the size of a cock ; its neck was adorned with a circle of splendid scarlet feathers, and he was going through the most singular evolutions. Sometimes he would turn rapidly round, then he would bend his head and move his eyes about like one possessed ; sometimes he would bristle up the feathers on his neck, and this movement produced a strange sound ; at other times he would spread out his tail



THE JAY.

like a fan, and flap his wings so rapidly that he appeared almost in a mist, and it was this beating of the wings that had produced the drum-like sound we had heard. He was surrounded by quite a flock of other birds resembling himself, but without the beautiful scarlet feathers in the neck. These birds had evidently come to look at him. They appeared to take great delight in his movements, and gazed at him attentively. I was very curious to see how all this would end, when suddenly the report of a gun was heard behind me. The comedy was brought to an end, the principal actor fell dead, the audience all flew rapidly away, and I was disappointed in my expectation of seeing the termination of the play.

I was very much annoyed at this interruption, and I could not help scolding Fritz soundly. "Why are you always so anxious," I said, "out of mere curiosity and wantonness to destroy everything you see? The necessity of obtaining food, or even the ardour of the chase, is occasionally an excuse for shooting; but there is moderation in everything." These words very quickly put an end to the young man's satisfaction; but since the bird was dead we might as well pick it up, and the sight of this new game almost made me forget Fritz's wanton cruelty.

"Is he not a beautiful bird, papa?" said Fritz. "What is the name of it?"



"I believe that it is the Virginian or Canadian Ruffed Grouse," I replied, "called by naturalists the *Tetrao tympanum*."

"Oh! if we could only see such an one in our poultry-yard at Falcon's Nest, it would be well worth the trouble of obtaining it."

"I thought of that," I said, "and we will not despair of success; and when one of our hens is inclined to sit, we will come here with the monkey, and make him search for the eggs. If we find a nest, we will make one of our hens sit on it; so we may possess some of these beautiful Canadian chickens."

We placed the bird on the donkey's back, and continued our route. We arrived at the guava trees, and refreshed ourselves with their somewhat acid fruits. At a few yards' distance we found our sledge just as we had left it ; but as the day was still young, we immediately began our projected excursion, as I wished to ascertain the boundaries of our island, if it were an island ; or whether it was not an isolated portion of the mainland.

So we continued to press on, but nevertheless with great caution, and always on the alert for fear of being surprised by some enemy. Turk marched bravely before us, confident in his own strength, and in our support. The donkey followed him slowly, with a thoughtful air, while we closed the line of march.

From time to time we fell in with small streams like that at Falcon's Nest, which offered us most agreeable refreshment. When we emerged from the calabash wood we were obliged to traverse fields of manioc and potatoes, which retarded us very much, as did also the long, high grass, and various roots of trees, which spread in all directions.

But we were quite compensated by the beauty of the landscape which opened before us. On the left, in the plain, we discovered a number of hares or rabbits, which were gambolling in the grass, or basking in the rays of the sun. Fritz took them for a family of marmots ; but as they did not make that peculiar whistling noise which is peculiar to the marmots when disturbed, we concluded that Fritz's conjecture was false ; and they were too quickly out of sight for us to obtain a specimen.

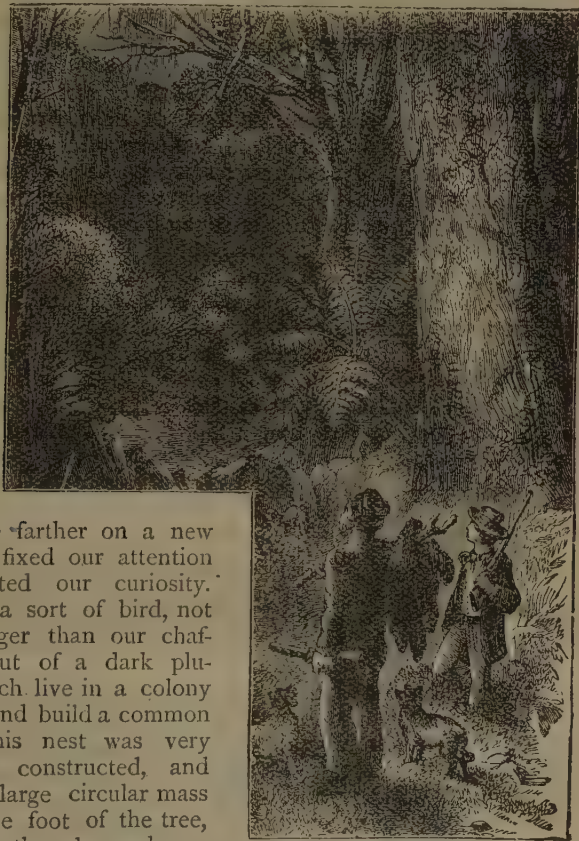
Soon after this incident we arrived at a beautiful cluster of plants which were quite unknown to us, which bore a species of berry of most peculiar form. These berries were like wax, about the size of a pea ; and when we had plucked a few of them, we noticed that they stuck to our fingers. I knew that in America there was a species of candleberry tree or myrtle, which is known as *Myrica cerifera*, and I concluded that this was what we had found. I was very much pleased with the discovery.

"Come along, my dear Fritz," I said, "we must collect some of these berries, they will be very glad of them at home, I am sure ; for we can now make a wax which will burn quite as well as bees'-wax, and gives forth a very agreeable odour."

"Yes, indeed," he replied, "we shall be well received with these pale berries, which stick so to our teeth that we cannot eat them ; for my own part, I would much rather fill my sack full of guava, for I am quite sure with these I should be made welcome."

"A most philosophical conclusion !" I replied smiling. "So, according to you, all fruits which are not good to eat are no use at all. I must say, I did not expect to hear such an argument from you."

After this I had not much trouble to convince him of the value these berries would be to us, for we could make excellent candles of them, a luxury of which we were sadly in want. Quickly persuaded by the explanation, Fritz, with my assistance, very soon filled a bag with the berries, which we placed upon the donkey, and then pursued our way.



A little farther on a new spectacle fixed our attention and excited our curiosity. This was a sort of bird, not much bigger than our chaffinches, but of a dark plumage, which live in a colony together, and build a common nest. This nest was very irregularly constructed, and formed a large circular mass around the foot of the tree, just about the place whence the branches sprung forth from the trunk. It was covered in with a species of roof, made of dry twigs, straw, and moss. It contained all round it a number of chambers, with doors and windows corresponding, each room of which was destined for one family of birds. This republic

seemed to me to be very numerous, and I do not think I am exaggerating in estimating the number of the inhabitants of the nest at, at least, a thousand. But it appeared to me strange that in this large number of birds only very few apparently were males; and I did not understand whether it was the scarcity of males or what other cause, which rendered this sort of commonwealth necessary for the existence of these birds.

While we were admiring this singular colony, we remarked a species of small paraquet, which kept quarrelling from time to time with the colonists, entering into some of the nests and attacking the birds, and even occasionally seeming inclined to assail us. Fritz was very anxious indeed to see these birds more closely, and above all to take away a couple of the young ones. So he threw down a package of provisions he was carrying, and climbed up to the tree to the great nest, into which he thrust his hand in search of the young birds. In his first two attempts he only found empty chambers, but at length he succeeded in reaching one that was occupied. But his curiosity was very quickly punished; for, as he carelessly inserted his hand, he received such a vigorous peck from the beak of the occupant that he uttered a cry of terror, and very nearly fell down from the tree. But he quickly recovered himself, and returned to the attack with more prudence. Seizing the bird by the body, he drew it out of the nest, notwithstanding its resistance. He immediately put it in his pocket, covered it up, and precipitately descended. The cries of distress uttered by the little prisoner soon attracted his comrades out of the nest, and they circled round Fritz in such a threatening manner that he judged it prudent to beat a retreat. The little assailants did not dare to pursue him to where I was standing, though I was obliged to gesticulate forcibly to keep them off.

Fritz took his captive from his pocket, and found out that it was a pretty little green paraquet; and he resolved to take it home and put it in a cage, and teach it to speak.

We then proceeded on our journey, and arrived at a wood composed of a sort of wild fig trees, whose round fruit enclosed a pulp of a somewhat acid taste; but on examining the trees a little more closely we remarked upon some of them a sort of gum, which resembled that which exudes from the cracks in trees, and was hardened by the sun and air. This new discovery once more excited Fritz's attention, for the resemblance of this gum to that of the cherry-tree and to the gum arabic had so much attraction for him that he could do nothing else but collect a quantity of it.

He endeavoured to break off and roll between his fingers a portion of this gum, so as to stretch it out and render it more transparent; but it

resisted all his efforts, and he would probably have thrown it away if the heat of his hands had not softened it, and the gum thus became very pliant and elastic, without breaking at all.

This phenomenon surprised him considerably, and he ran up to me, saying, "Look here, papa! I believe this is either india-rubber or elastic gum."

"What do you say? What do you say?" I cried. "This will be a most important discovery for us. Give it to me, that I may examine it."

"But, papa," continued Fritz, "what good will it do us, even if it be india-rubber? as we have nothing to draw here, we have no pencil marks to rub out; so, of what use can it be to us?"

"Oh, my goodness!" I said, "what a number of questions all at once! Do give a little breathing time, and I will endeavour to answer them all. The caoutchouc is a gum which exudes from certain trees, and particularly from that plant which bears its name. It escapes from incisions made in the bark, and runs into vessels which are placed at the foot of the trees to receive it. In Switzerland we get a great portion of it through Portugal and France, because it comes direct from the Brazils, Guiana, and Cayenne. It reaches us usually in the form of black bottles of a greater or lesser size, and for this reason: the natives who collect it make earthen bottles of different sizes, and leave them to dry. They afterwards permit this flexible gum to spread itself in repeated layers over these bottles; they then suspend them over the fire until the gum is completely dry and hard, the smoke giving to the india-rubber the dark colour it usually possesses. Then the earthen bottles are broken, and the pieces carefully extracted from the mouth of the india-rubber bottle. In this manner the india-rubber shapes are obtained soft and flexible, and ready for exportation."

"This way of making it by the natives," said Fritz, "appears to me to be extremely simple and easy. We shall be able to make some bottles which will be extremely useful to us in our hunting expeditions and excursions."

"Not only that," I added, "but we shall now be able to make boots and shoes when our others are worn out. You did not understand at first why this discovery pleased me so much, but it was because I foresaw a number of uses to which we could put it. In case of necessity it will serve us instead of silk, wool, felt, etc.; but its waterproof qualities render it particularly appropriate for boots and shoes."

"Oh, papa!" exclaimed Fritz, "it is enough for one day, surely, to have discovered this caoutchouc—it is splendid."

Enchanted with our discovery, and delighted with the idea of possessing india-rubber boots, we still continued our route; and having advanced for some time, we reached a wood of cocoa-nut trees which

extended quite down to the sea, and which we had already passed, to visit this locality.

We did not delay to press on, so as to reach, at least, the extremity of this wood. We arrived at last at an open space, and we recognised to the right, the Great Bay; and to the left, Cape Disappointment. Now for the first time I noticed amongst the cocoa-nut trees a species of small palm, which I fancied must be the sago-palm; and in examining one which the wind had blown down, I saw that the pith was of a particular kind, and had attracted my attention. I then endeavoured to cut the trunk with my hatchet, to ascertain if this pith really possessed any peculiar qualities. To my great joy, I perceived that it had quite



SAGO PALM.

the flavour of the sago which is exported to Europe, and is so much used in medicine. I saw some great larvæ on the tree; and as I knew that a species of worm which is much esteemed as food in the West Indies is enclosed in the sago-tree, I resolved, in my delight at the discovery, to cook some of them on the spot, and taste them. I therefore spitted a dozen or so of them on a long rod, and, sprinkling them with a little salt, roasted them over the fire which I lit for the purpose.

Before long a succulent gravy ran from this novel article of food; and they exhaled such an appetizing smell that my first repugnance speedily gave way. I placed one of the larvæ on a potato well covered in butter, and tasting it I found it delicious.

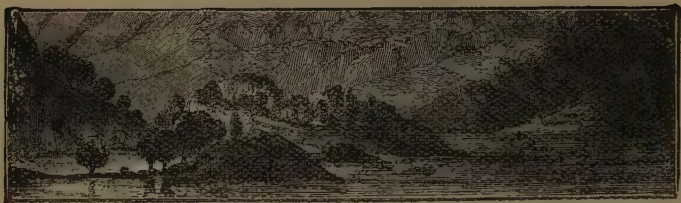
Fritz, who had all along regarded these proceedings more as a joke than anything else, and who was quite prepared to laugh at me when, as he expected, I should reject the larva with disgust, was very much astonished to see me eat it with so much relish. He then ventured to taste some also, and finding them so good, he procured another

handful from the tree, and would not rest till he had cooked some for himself.

After this little repast, we retraced our steps, and reached home without any adventure. My family had been somewhat anxious at my long absence, and grumbled a little at us; but their discontent quickly vanished when they saw the treasures we had brought home, and heard the recital of our expedition. Although our narrative was not couched in any ornamental phrase, and contained no poetic inventions, it nevertheless riveted the attention of our audience. But what more than all attracted the children, was the green paraquet, which was to them the most important of all our discoveries. Frank immediately set about talking to it, pretending that, as Fritz had been amused with it during the daytime, it was now necessary to give it up to him altogether. When we related the manner in which it had been captured, the little ones could not understand why the paraquet, instead of living with a colony of these birds, had its own particular nest.

I told them that we had seen the paraquet fight on many occasions with the other birds, and that it was probable that this one, too lazy to build a nest for itself, had been in the habit of laying its eggs and hatching them in one of the compartments abandoned by the bird colony, and from that cause arose the frequent encounters which it had to sustain against the other birds. My wife was, above all things, delighted with the discovery of the india-rubber and wax berries, and she now looked forward to having as many candles as she could wish for; and I promised her that on the following day I would endeavour to make some for her.





CHAPTER XIX.

Candle Making.—Fortifying our Home.—Clothing required.—A last Visit to the Wreck.—The Ship blown up.—Collecting the Remains.



NEED scarcely say that I had no peace upon the following morning, either from my wife or children, until I had consented to set about the manufacture of the candles. I was therefore obliged to think seriously how I was to make them.

I knew that a little animal fat would be very useful to mix with the wax, so as to make my candles burn more easily ; but as there were no means of procuring it, I resolved to set about the work with what appliances I possessed ; and I at once commenced my preparations.

We filled one of our largest saucepans quite full of the wax berries, and obtained a considerable quantity of really excellent green wax, which I poured into another vessel which I had by me for the purpose.

While I had been thus occupied, my wife had been preparing a number of threads which she drew from a piece of canvas. These I carefully steeped in the vessel I had prepared ; then, drawing them out all coated with wax, I exposed them to the air until they were perfectly dry and hard. I repeated this operation two or three times, until the candles were of the desired thickness.

We then suspended them in a shady place to harden. It is true that these candles were not very elegant, neither so round nor so well-proportioned as candles usually are in Europe ; but when we made trial of them at night they gave us a clear bright light, which caused us to feel very happy. For the future we should not have to go to bed at sunset, as hitherto.

This fortunate success gave us courage to try another manufacture, and one which my wife was very anxious for us to attempt. We had a considerable quantity of cream, and she had frequently wished to make

some butter ; but we had none of the necessary appliances, and it may be easily imagined that there was no churn at Falcon's Nest.

However, my mind was quickly made up. I determined to proceed



upon the Hottentot plan ; only, instead of using a skin, as they do, I employed one of the large calabashes which we had brought home. I filled this half-full of cream, and closed the aperture firmly, so that none of the cream should escape. To the calabash I fastened a long piece of canvas, the four corners of which were tied to four stakes procured for the purpose, so as to form a species of swing.

When this was all ready, I told my boys to shake it about ; and as the work was by no means hard, they set about it with a will, amidst a

fire of jokes and peals of laughter. After a time, I thought that the butter must have formed, and the calabash was accordingly opened. To our great delight we found that we had succeeded in making a quantity of very excellent butter.

But now I had another and a much more difficult task to perform, which had for a long time appeared quite impracticable, and which had cost me much study and trouble, all the more so because I must carry it to a conclusion alone.

We had brought four wheels from the wreck, and as I had remarked that our sledge was open to all sorts of objections,—that it was difficult to draw, and that it could not always be taken with us in consequence of its unwieldiness,—I had been thinking of making it into a sort of carriage and to turn out a conveyance sufficiently good to transport our provisions and stores.

Impatience, and the want of power and time to do it in, led me to decide to make only a two-wheeled wagon, and to defer the construction of a larger conveyance till a more convenient opportunity.

It was above all things necessary that we should give our attention to the embellishment and to the fortifying of our establishment at Zeltheim. We planted round it those trees which flourish best in warmth and light, such as orange and lemon trees; pistachio, mulberries, mangoes, and olives also found a suitable habitation there, also the beautiful kind of bay and fruit trees. The most common sorts were disposed here and there in a promiscuous manner, so as to give the place the aspect of a beautiful glade. We afterwards employed ourselves in fortifying and masking Zeltheim, and for this purpose we planted a number of trees on the banks of the Jackal River; and placed them so close together that we were in hopes before long they would form a hedge sufficiently thick to baffle the gaze of any curious intruders, and even to defend us against an attack of savages.

I knew that the branches of the orange and citron trees were very sharp and pointed, and they would offer all the protection that a thick prickly hedge could afford. Besides, to render this barrier of a still more impenetrable and forbidding aspect, I placed amongst them some pomegranate shoots which I had brought from the vessel, and the seed of some of those pretty guavas which we had found in the wood. Finally, here and there, we planted a large tree for the purpose of affording us shade, and to encourage the thick growth of the grass, which otherwise would be burnt up by the sun. This was done with the object that if we had to retreat into our fortress we should have something on which to feed our cattle.

All our trees began to grow rapidly, in consequence of the wonderful climate they enjoyed; and we were well assured that when they had

grown up a little more, we should be well protected from the attacks even of wild beasts. Nevertheless, I wished to add still more to our means of defence. I chose two small hillocks near the river to serve us as bastions, upon which I proposed to place the two cannons belonging to the pinnacle, or even guns of larger calibre, which I intended to bring from the wreck. As our bridge, as at present constructed, offered a means of approach to an enemy, I determined to make an arrangement by which it could be raised or lowered at pleasure ; but until all the necessary preparations were completed, we must be content to take up the planks of the bridge as soon as we crossed over, so as to protect our plantations and stores against the attacks of wild animals. It will be readily understood, besides, that we planted close round our tent trees of various kinds, and notably some fine cedars on the margin of the Bay to which we could moor our future vessels so as we should be able to take the bearings of our habitation when we were far out at sea.

We employed ourselves quite six weeks at this work, and I am happy to say that we enjoyed most excellent health. It appeared as if the constant employment had done us all good, both in our bodily and moral health. Every Sunday was religiously observed, and welcomed with joy as a day of rest, for we felt somewhat fatigued as the end of the week approached. Our minds required some change, and we were glad to turn to some other occupation of a less material character, and our feelings demanded some higher standard of work.

So the religious occupation of the Sunday morning, and the gymnastic exercises in which we subsequently indulged, were always welcome to us. It was quite astonishing to see my young sons, to whom the work of the past week had apparently given new vigour, amusing themselves by climbing the trees, running races, throwing darts, and practising with their lassoes or enjoying a swim. I perceived that the body as well as the mind was invigorated by the change of occupation.

But in the midst of all these occupations, which kept us employed for such a length of time, two reasons induced us to make another expedition to the wreck, to bring off whatever we thought would prove necessary.

Our clothes were beginning to wear out ; and the dress of the officers and men of the vessel, which we made use of from time to time, were not in a first-rate condition, so we were obliged to reflect upon the possibility of all our garments resolving themselves into rags. But, besides this, my new wagon, which had succeeded very well on our first expedition to the plantation, had got into a rather dilapidated condition, which I had not anticipated. At the least strain on them, the wheels creaked so loudly that we were fain to stop our ears, and it had become so difficult to draw, that the ass and the cow together scarcely sufficed

to pull it. I occasionally greased the axles with a little butter, but at the end of an hour or two the noise began again as bad as before; and besides, the butter was too valuable to us to permit of our continuing to use it in this way for any length of time.

These two circumstances determined me to make another and a last expedition to the wreck. We had no doubt that we could secure at least five or six sailors' chests full of linen, and besides I was pretty sure that in the hold I should find a quantity of cart-grease and tar. It also occurred to me that we should be able to get on shore some of the cannon which were still on the ship, and these would tend to give a much more respectable appearance to our entrenchments as well as to our pinnace.

So the first fine day I set out for the wreck with my three eldest sons, and we reached the reef without accident. We found the wreck in almost the same state in which we had last left her; but the wind and the action of the waves had displaced several timbers which had been quite uninjured during our previous visits. Without any loss of time, we immediately set about searching for two casks of tar, and endeavoured to sling them into our pinnace by means of a pulley; but, besides this, we had also to search for some of the sailors' trunks, and some ammunition.

We succeeded in our search, and shipped a great quantity of powder and ball. Finally, we set ourselves to get out the several guns and cannon. The pulley was once more brought into play, and we raised the former without difficulty, but we were not so successful with the cannon. Their great weight defied all our efforts: we were therefore obliged to limit our desires to the possession of the four-pounders, of which we hoped to become masters after some little trouble.

With this object in view, we returned on two subsequent occasions to the wreck. We made all the preparations we judged necessary for lifting out these guns, and on each occasion we returned to shore with a tremendous quantity of doors, windows, locks, bolts, spars, iron work, and other things precious to us, which we hoped to use in the construction of our house.

While we were thus stripping the vessel to release the cannon, we made up our minds to take possession of three or four immense copper pans which had been destined for the sugar manufactory, and which were too heavy to be placed in our little boat. But, determined not to be beaten, I attached to each of them three or four empty casks, as was requisite according to the size of the caldrons, and that they might be floated if they were once thrown into the sea.

When these preparations were all completed, I boldly determined to blow up the whole of the wreck, as I was not able to obtain possession

of its timbers in any other manner. "The winds and waves," I said, "will carry the *débris* to shore, and will save us the trouble of transporting them thither; it will then be easy for us to collect them, and to place them in store for future use."

For this purpose, therefore, we rolled a cask of gunpowder to the bottom of the hold, and attached to it a long fuse which would burn for several hours, and having lighted it we returned as quickly as possible to shore, and reached Safety Bay in a very short space of time, as the wind was favourable. We were unable to rest quietly, as we were all very anxious to see the ship blown up; and as the fuse was long enough in my estimation to burn until nightfall we carried our supper up to the summit of the small eminence of which I have often spoken, from which place we could see the wreck, and would have a good view of the explosion.

We had had our supper, and evening was gathering around us, when suddenly a tremendous explosion and a bright pillar of flame announced to us that the ship had blown up, and that our object was accomplished. But it was not without grief that we witnessed the scene. It appeared to us that now the last link of communication that attached us to our native land had been for ever broken.

In silence we returned to our tent; and instead of the joyous cries which I expected to hear from the children, I distinguished nothing but sighs from the whole party, and even I myself had great difficulty in suppressing my own. The ship was like an old and faithful friend, and now it was gone from us for ever.

We returned, as I said, very sad, to Zeltheim; but a good night's rest effaced all the uncomfortable impressions of the day before. We were very early on foot the next morning, and went down to the sea-shore, where we found a quantity of *débris* strewn about, amongst which, with great pleasure, I noticed the heavy casks which I had attached to the copper caldrons that I had not been able to take in the boat, and which I destined for the refinement of our sugar.

For some time we were occupied in picking up the wreckage which the wind was bringing rapidly to land. My wife, while we were thus engaged on the beach, discovered that two of our ducks and one of the geese had each hatched a brood amongst the reeds, and their appearance made her regret her absence from her little feathered colony at Falcon's Nest. Each of us had a secret wish to return thither, and so I announced our departure for the following day.

Meantime we protected, as well as we could with canvas, the cannon, of which we had become possessed. We afterwards rolled the heavy powder casks behind an immense rock, so that if by any chance they should explode, our tent would be in no danger. We also covered

them with a pent-house of planks to keep off the rain. My wife had most particularly insisted upon these precautions being taken, for the near vicinity of the powder alarmed her, and she feared some accident. She herself visited our magazine, in order to see that proper precautions had been taken to prevent an explosion. We paid another visit to the little family of ducks and geese, at which we were much delighted, and I must confess we looked forward to a roast duckling or gosling one of these days with great pleasure. We threw them some small pieces of biscuit, so as to accustom them to our presence, and then, having made our preparations for an early start to Falcon's Nest the next day, we retired to rest.





CHAPTER XX.

Another Excursion.—Collecting the Caoutchouc Gum.—Cocoa-nuts.—The Cabbage Palm.—The Donkey's Excitement.—A Prospect.—The Buffaloes.—Capture of the Young Buffalo.—Birds of Prey.



IN our way towards Falcon's Nest, which we reached without adventure, we noticed that a great number of the young fruit-trees we had planted had not been sufficiently strong to withstand the sea breeze, so we determined to make an expedition to Cape Disappointment, as soon as possible, for some bamboos which we could use as stakes to support the trees.

We had no sooner reached our home than a number of circumstances combined to hasten our departure. One of the fowls was sitting, and it was absolutely necessary to go and seek for the eggs amongst the bushes. Our supply of candles was exhausted, and we had now found them so useful that we did not wish to go without them; and that nothing might be wanting, we found that our sow had evidently disappeared for some days past. Add to all these reasons, that we were longing for some guavas as well as sugar-canes for ourselves, and you will understand that each and all of us had some very excellent motives for going on an expedition together immediately.

One fine morning, therefore, the whole family left Falcon's Nest for that happy country which was the object of our desires. On this occasion we took good care to furnish ourselves with everything we thought most likely to facilitate our progress. Instead of the chaise, we took the cart, in which we fixed a seat for two persons, so that when one of the children was tired he could rest without compelling us to stop. We took a good supply of provisions also, and a flask of canary, two bottles of water; and in fact all necessary supplies, some in the cart, some carried by ourselves. Of course we also bore our arms and ammunition. I carried two long strips of shark skin for the purpose of assisting the

boys to climb the cocoa-nut trees, a feat they subsequently performed with much skill.

The morning was beautiful, and the whole family set out in the highest spirits. After having traversed the potato and manioc fields, and passed through the grove of guava trees, we directed our steps towards the colony of birds, which I now recognised as the species called by Linnæus the *Loxia gregaria*, for every one of the family was anxious to



see the curious sight of which Fritz and I had given them such a graphic account.

It was no easy matter to conduct our equipage through the brambles, which almost barred our progress ; but with the assistance of our axes we managed to make our way, more especially as the wheeled cart ran more easily than the sledge would have done. So we got through, and

were enabled besides to gather a great quantity of guavas, which we placed in the cart, and arrived in very good time at the tree in which the colony of birds had built their nests.

We thought it prudent to halt here for some little time to rest our animals. We thus had leisure to examine the immense nests, and even to notice that the birds had not taken up their abode amongst those trees without very good reason, for they kept coming in and out, and appeared to eat the fruit with great relish.

If the berries were not exactly disagreeable to our own taste, they



were at least rather insipid, but we did not fail to collect a quantity of them for our candles at Falcon's Nest. We deferred to put Master Knips, the monkey, on the trail for the hen's eggs until our return, for it would have been very foolish on our part to have carried eggs with us on our expedition.

Not very far beyond this halting-place we reached the india-rubber tree; and here we stopped sufficiently long to collect a quantity of the white juice it contained, or at least make an attempt to collect it, and for this purpose we had brought with us a number of cocoa-nut vessels and

calabashes. I made several incisions in the tree, and the sap ran out in such abundance that before long all our vessels were filled.

We placed them on one side, so that we might call for them on our return, and make the experiment which we had in view. We then advanced still farther, and reached the cocoa-nut trees, thence we deviated slightly to the right and arrived at a pretty little spot amongst the sugar-canes and bamboos. We had been very happy in our selection, for it was a most delightful place: on our left were the sugar-canes, on our right the lofty bamboos. In front extended the magnificent grove of palm-trees, beyond which rose up the bold promontory of Cape Disappointment.

The panorama which met our gaze was so exquisite that it was unanimously decided to make this beautiful place the centre of our excursions. It was even suggested that we should give up our residence at Falcon's Nest, and establish our home here. The security which our great tree offered us at the latter place, and the thousand conveniences with which we had surrounded ourselves, as well as the domestic ties, alone prevented us from deciding to move hither.

Fritz and Jack were soon ready for the cocoa-nuts, and hurried towards two trees which were laden with fruit. They climbed up a little way quickly enough, with the assistance of Ernest, but their strength was very soon expended; and as the trunks of trees were too large for them to clasp, they were obliged unwillingly to slide down to the ground again, and content themselves with contemplating the height of the polished stems.

I could not remain an idle spectator, for I wished the boys to climb one of these trees, and I was desirous to afford them all the assistance in my power; but to obtain the desired fruits, as well as to escape a danger which appeared to threaten them if they fell, it seemed only right that I should give them the means of success. So I approached to encourage and to help them. I attached under their arms and to their legs the pieces of shark's skin that I had prepared, which from the roughness of its surface would permit them to clasp the tree and to take breath occasionally.

I also attached a cord to their legs and passed it round the trunk of the tree, showing them the manner in which to make use of it, as the natives do; adding, that with this assistance they need have no fear of falling, and by means of the rope they would be able to scale the tallest trees.

The lads, animated by my words, re-commenced with new vigour, and found such assistance from the cord and shark's skin, that in a very short time they had reached the top of the trees, from which elevated situation they uttered cries of triumph, and grimaced at us like a couple

of monkeys ; then drawing their hatchets, they hacked away right and left, and caused such a hail of cocoa-nuts to fall that we were obliged to run away to save our heads.

Scarcely had our little monkey noticed what they were about, than the spirit of emulation seized him, and escaping from our custody, he ascended another tree, and half with his feet and half with his teeth, detached the nuts as quickly as Fritz or Jack with their hatchets. Then descending rapidly, he reached the ground long before the two boys had got as far as the lower branches, and was received by us with peals of laughter. The lads descended also without accident, and we were delighted to see our attempt had been so successful.

Ernest alone did not appear to show the general joy ; and Fritz and Jack, as they gathered up their booty, addressed him somewhat sarcastically, congratulating him on the energy he had shown. He took this very quietly, and continued to inspect various palm-trees in the vicinity. At length he requested me to give him half a cocoa-nut shell, which would serve him as a cup ; then making a little hole through the top of it, he suspended it by a cord to the button-hole of his coat, heaved a sigh, and gazing once more in a meditative manner on the top of the trees, until my curiosity was much excited, he said, rising from his seat,—

“Most honourable lady and gentlemen ; it is very true that it is a difficult thing for me to ascend these trees ; but as that feat has brought so much honour upon those who have performed it, I also wish to make the attempt, and to see whether I cannot bring down something which shall be, at least, as valuable as the cocoa-nuts which my illustrious brothers have procured.”

“Bravo, bravo,” I exclaimed, “you should not be belindhand ; and I am glad to see that the sentiment of honour has excited you to activity, for I perceive that you must possess some energy to enable you to conquer your laziness.”

As I spoke, I approached him, and placed on his arms and legs the strips of shark skin, furnished him with the cord, in like manner as I had assisted Fritz and Jack, and told him to choose the tree he wished to ascend. We soon saw him ascend one, quite as easily as his brothers, thus demonstrating that when he really wished to carry out an idea he was capable of displaying as much energy and skill as the rest of us.

Fritz and Jack, who were afraid of being put in the shade by this prowess on Ernest's part, regarded him very attentively ; but I remarked that they were endeavouring to stifle their laughter, and why, I could not at first comprehend. But their motive was soon apparent. As soon as Ernest had succeeded in reaching the top of the tree, they burst into a roar of laughter, crying out to him “Perfect, perfect, Signor Ernest ;

but in your wisdom you have selected a tree which has no fruit on it. What a lot of cocoa-nuts you will bring down with you."

I looked at the tree, and saw with a feeling of disappointment that the young jokers were correct, and that instead of praise, the noble emulation of Ernest would only expose him to fresh raillery. But the young philosopher retained his dignity, and was not at all disconcerted, but as calmly as ever looked down with a pitying expression upon his brothers. He ascended still higher in the tree, and at length drawing his hatchet, cut off a large bunch of green and tender leaves, which fell at our feet.

"The wretched boy," said his mother, in a dissatisfied tone, "is disappointed in not finding nuts, so he has cut off the beautiful leaves of the palm; it will now die, and never bear any fruit. Is he to be allowed to vent his ill-humour in this way?"

"Do not put yourself out," cried Ernest, from his lofty perch; "what I have cut off is a beautiful palm-cabbage; just taste it, and I will not descend this tree if it does not prove as delicate as a cocoa-nut."

"A palm-cabbage, indeed," exclaimed Frank, "as if cabbage ever grew on trees,—in Switzerland it grows on a little stalk; and besides, the ground ought to be very fertile before a cabbage could grow to such a tree as this."

"But, my dear boy," I replied, "the palm-cabbage is a very different thing from our little European one. It is only a long roll of tender leaves, wound one round another, and which would have opened like the others if Ernest had not cut it. But the philosopher is right; the palm-cabbage is very wholesome, very tender and delicate, and Europeans who dwell in India highly appreciate it; so this time it is not the wise Ernest, but his foolish brothers who ought to be held up to ridicule. So you see, my children, how difficult it is to judge a man's actions, even when he has accomplished his aim; but how much worse is it to pass judgment upon an action before it is actually commenced. Even your good mother, who always displays such calmness and sweetness of temper, has permitted herself to be deceived by appearances, and scolded Ernest, who deserves nothing but praise."

"But," she answered, laughing, "while you are passing such a magnificent panegyric upon him, he is stopping a long way up in the tree, and he may be tempted to think he has done wrong and will not dare to descend; and that he has only cut the cabbage for a joke, and to prevent his brothers continuing their jokes."

At this remark we all looked up again, and saw that Ernest was in fact seated at the very top of the tree as quietly as if he had made up his mind to take the place of the cabbage he had cut off. However, he soon finished what he was about, and as there were many branches

of the tree in the way, we were unable to perceive what he had been doing ; so when he had descended, we surrounded him with some curiosity, but did not perceive anything extraordinary about him. I willingly praised him as he deserved, and helped him to take off his accoutrements ; but in a moment or two he took in his hand a cocoa-nut cup which was still hanging to his button hole, drew from his pocket a



small bottle which he had secreted without my knowledge, and pouring a liquor into the cup, presented it to me with a triumphant air, saying,—
“There, papa, is a new drink. I hope you will find it good, for it is palm wine, and ought to taste very nice indeed.”

As he spoke, his mother and brothers gazed at him as if he were going out of his mind ; but I, recollecting what I had read, cried out joyfully, “Capital, my boy ; I will drink your health.”

All tasted the wine after me. I took a good sip of it, and finding it so agreeable and strengthening, I immediately passed it to my wife, feeling very sure that if I once gave it into the boys’ hands there would be none of it left.

The afternoon was by this time drawing on, and as we had made up our minds to pass the night in this charming spot, we resolved to set about building a hut in the wood with branches and leaves, as hunters do in the American forest. I had, amongst other things, brought from Falcon's Nest a large piece of canvas and some ropes, so that our hut had somewhat the appearance of a tent; but while we were occupied in its construction, we were all of a sudden astonished by the extraordinary agitation displayed by the ass which had been grazing tranquilly close by, and which, contrary to its usual habits, began to kick and jump, and then with a loud hee-haw, which caused us a great deal of surprise, he dashed off at full gallop into the forest, and disappeared.

Unfortunately, Turk and Bill, who would probably have arrested the fugitive, were absent at the moment; we were somewhat alarmed, for we feared that it was the vicinity of some wild beast which had caused the animal's sudden flight; and the occurrence had been so unexpected that we had scarcely presence of mind to seize our guns and draw together to await the enemy's attack.

Nevertheless we called the dogs in, and set out upon the trail of the fugitive. As they kept leaping around us, apparently unconscious of any danger, I felt more at ease, and commenced to patrol in the vicinity of our hut. Nothing of a suspicious nature met our gaze, and accompanied by Fritz and the two dogs I made a further search amongst the grove of sugar-canes in which the runaway had disappeared, hoping that the dogs would light upon his trail and follow it up. But probably they did not understand what it was that I required, and the trail of an ass was not quite sufficient to arouse them to the proper pitch of hunting, for they were accustomed to see the animal amongst us every day; they therefore ran to and fro quietly amongst the canes, without giving any attention to the trail which we had come out to discover.

As the sun was now about to set, I did not dare to remain longer absent from my family; and constrained to return, partly by fatigue and partly by the prospect of conviction that my search was useless, I returned with Fritz to the hut, where we found the rest of the family perfectly quiet, and the structure completed. We had now only to gather a quantity of dry grass and reeds for our beds, and also some wood and canes for a fire which would serve as a deterrent of wild beasts. I left this task to my wife and children, for having noticed that we had not a sufficient quantity of fuel to keep up a fire all night, I hit upon the expedient of supplementing it with a number of torches, which I immediately proceeded to make.

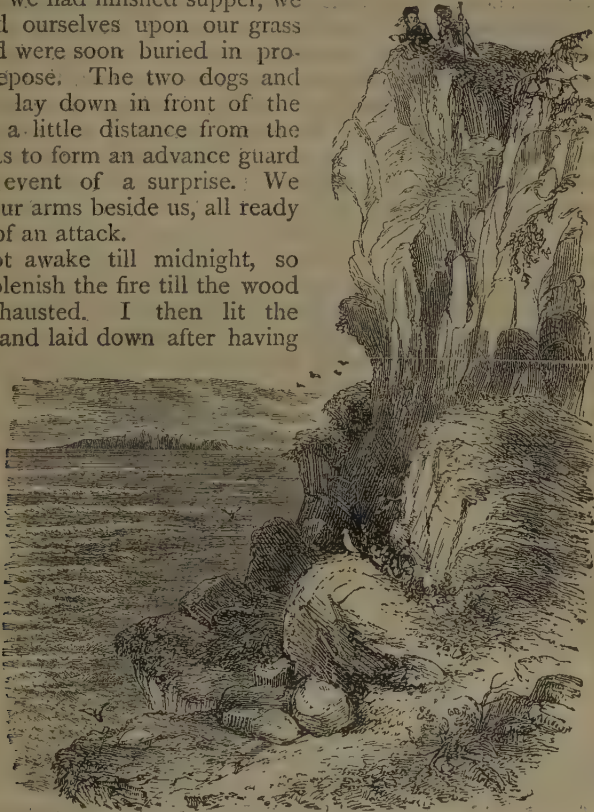
With this object I bound some canes up in small packets, which I fastened as the natives of the Antilles do; and as I had not pressed out the juice, I conjectured that they would burn long and brightly, and

furnish us with plenty of light throughout the night. These bundles of sugar-cane, which were about five feet long, were planted right and left of the door of our cabin, while the fire was lighted in the centre to prepare supper by. This fire was kept up so long as our wood lasted.

The night was rather chilly, and we were very glad to warm ourselves.

When we had finished supper, we stretched ourselves upon our grass beds and were soon buried in profound repose. The two dogs and the cow lay down in front of the tent, at a little distance from the fire, so as to form an advance guard in the event of a surprise. We placed our arms beside us, all ready in case of an attack.

I kept awake till midnight, so as to replenish the fire till the wood was exhausted. I then lit the torches, and laid down after having



woke my wife, who would now take her turn to watch and keep them alight, but as all appeared quiet around us, after a time she went to sleep. Next morning at an early hour every one was awake and ready for action. Our first proceeding was to kneel down and thank Heaven for the protection which had been vouchsafed to us during the night.

We breakfasted on the cow's milk, some potatoes and Dutch cheese,

and talked over our plans for the day. We had hoped that the night and the sight of our fires would have induced our donkey to return, but we were disappointed. Jack observed that it really must be a great ass to run the risk of meeting lions and tigers in the desert, rather than to remain under the protection of our dogs, and near our fire, and under those circumstances he thought it would be no use to seek for him.

But the little man's advice was not taken; and the more we reflected the more we decided that it was necessary to recover the ass, and to spare no efforts for that purpose. So it was resolved that I, accompanied by one of the boys, and by the dogs, should go in search of the animal, while the remainder of the family collected sugar-cane, palm wine and cocoa-nuts, so that we should be able to return to Falcon's Nest the following day. As I whistled to the dogs, it occurred to me that on this occasion I ought to leave the eldest boys to defend their mother and Frank, and that I ought only to take the thoughtless Jack with me; and I was the more willing to do so as he was very anxious to make up by his activity and exertion for the foolish advice he had given.

In order to profit by the cool of the morning we set out without further delay. We were well supplied with provisions, hatchets, and a couple of small swords with which we intended to open the cocoa-nuts and refresh ourselves with the milk when we stood in need of it. We plunged immediately into the bamboo grove, and very soon lost sight of our camp. We, however, were by no means free from apprehension on account of those we had left.

We had already marched for nearly an hour, and as yet saw no prospect of clearing the bamboos, and should have been tempted to turn back if the necessity of bringing our enterprise to a termination and a feeling of shame had not constrained us to continue. A little farther on we thought that we perceived on the damp ground some traces of the donkey's hoofs, and this sight renewed our energies. We hurried in that direction, and at length emerged from the wood to a plain of considerable extent, at the end of which was the great bay. Here we discovered that a considerable river flowed into the sea, and that the promontory we had seen on our right trended down almost to the banks of this stream, and was only separated from it by a narrow ridge of low rocks which were not difficult to climb. I thought it most probable that the ass would take his way along the bank of the stream, instead of crossing it; and the hope of discovering something behind the ridge of rocks, decided us to attempt to pass beyond them. We therefore went straight ahead, and very soon arrived at a stream which escaped from an opening in the rocks on the right, and fell into the river on the left, but it was so deep and rapid that we could only find one place at which we could possibly cross it. There I was delighted to perceive

the hoof-prints of the ass in the wet sand ; the impressions were numerous, and we were astonished to see that they were mixed up with a



number of other foot marks much larger and of a somewhat different form. We followed the trail with the most lively curiosity.

The small chain of hills soon came to an end, and the stream flowed

away to the right, so that we now perceived, stretched out before us, an immense plain covered with the most luxuriant vegetation, which presented a glowing panorama of peace, fertility and beauty.

We mounted to the summit of a small hill which had till then concealed a portion of the distant view, and feasted our eyes upon the splendid prospect that now lay all around us in this terrestrial paradise. Away to the right we could perceive a chain of mountains or high rocks extending to the very extremity of the plain as far as the eye could reach. The plain itself in that direction was bounded by a line of hills. To the left of our position the river meandered like a glittering golden ribbon through the prairie, and below the river were more rocks and mountains, some of the latter being evidently of an immense altitude, and reaching up into the clouds. But we could not distinguish any trace of human habitation in any direction. There was no movement visible over the whole of this enormous tract of land except the birds which flew in numbers in the air, and the butterflies which flitted from flower to flower in the grass, and far away in the distance a herd of some species of wild animals somewhat resembling cows, but which were of a kind quite unknown to us, was moving.

We had entirely lost the trail of the ass in the thick grass, but as I could not bring myself to relinquish entirely the chance of recapturing him, I determined to approach the herd as closely as possible without alarming them, and to ascertain whether the runaway was amongst them. We followed the oxen as they continued their course along the bank of the river, hoping that a thick cluster of reeds would conceal us from the eyes of the herd.

But the ground soon became so very marshy and the rushes grew so thickly that we were obliged to keep farther off. The rushes were larger than any we had ever before seen, and I came to the conclusion that they were the *arundo bamboos*, or the giant reed of America, *arundo gigantea*, for the stems were as thick as a man's body and they grew to a height of ten or twelve yards.

When at length we emerged from this forest of reeds we found ourselves unexpectedly within about forty paces of the herd of buffaloes, for such they were. They were not numerous, but they looked very formidable and wild, and I immediately recognised the perilous situation in which we were placed. Indeed I was so thoroughly alarmed that I quite forgot to reload my rifle, and I stood gazing at the herd like one petrified.

Fortunately our dogs were some distance in the rear, and the buffaloes appeared so little accustomed to the sight of man that they kept quiet without attempting to move, and gazed at us in the greatest astonishment, without showing any disposition either to advance or retreat.

To this ignorance of the human race we probably owed our lives, for we were thus enabled to recover our presence of mind a little, and to prepare for action. I had not the least desire to attack these formidable animals, and I had already made up my mind to execute a judicious retiring movement when unfortunately Turk and Bill made their appearance and were immediately perceived by the buffaloes. They at once set up a most terrible bellowing and began to paw the ground and toss their heads about in such an alarming manner that our blood actually ran cold in our veins, and I was sure that they would now charge down at us and the dogs, which they evidently took for wolves or jackals.

Our fate now seemed certain. We had not a chance to escape. But the dogs did not appear in any way to realize danger. We should have been only too glad if we could have withdrawn them; but they launched themselves with the greatest bravery upon a young buffalo, which was standing at about a dozen paces in advance of the rest of the herd. Seizing it by the ears with their usual tenacity, and disregarding the struggles of the animal, they kept hold tightly and attempted to drag the calf to the place where we were standing.

The fight was fairly begun and we could not abandon our brave dogs, so it was necessary to commence hostilities on our own account, which nevertheless appeared an act of the greatest folly under the circumstances.

With loudly beating hearts we both fired at the advancing buffaloes at the same instant.

The result was as astonishing as it was pleasing to us. The discharge of our guns rang out loudly, and to our inexpressible joy we perceived the buffaloes halt, and then turning round they galloped over the plain at full speed, nor did they stop until they reached the low-lying range of hills in the distance.

But one of the herd—a female—and in all probability the mother of the young buffalo the dogs had attacked, for she advanced to the assistance of the calf—had been wounded by our fire. Her wound and anxiety for her offspring rendered her so savage that she did not attempt to run away, but after a moment's pause she charged furiously upon our dogs, and would certainly have disabled, if not killed them outright, had I not by a timely shot rolled her over as she advanced, and we were thus enabled to approach the scene of the combat, and to put an end to her struggles with a pistol.

I must say that it was only then that we realized the danger we had escaped. The terror which we had experienced had quite upset us, we had looked death so closely in the face. I was very much astonished at the coolness Jack had displayed, for he had most bravely fired at the herd, instead of uttering cries of terror and displaying a weakness which

might have cost us our lives. I bestowed upon him the praise he had so well merited, and I told him how very necessary it was under all such circumstances not to lose his presence of mind or to disturb his companions by useless ejaculations, for sometimes the safety of the whole party might depend upon it.

But we had not time to waste on such considerations as these, for the young buffalo was defending himself so vigorously between the two



dogs, and lashing out with such force in every direction, that we were fearful that they would be severely wounded if we did not hasten to their assistance. To tell the truth, I must say that I did not know how we could secure the animal without running into imminent danger, but Jack's quick invention relieved me from my embarrassment.

Retiring to some distance he drew his sling from his pocket, for he always carried it about him, and cast it with unerring aim around the

hind legs of the struggling animal. The buffalo fell to the ground, and we were thus enabled to approach it, and to tie its legs with the cord sufficiently tight to prevent it running away while we kept the dogs off.

"It is a very fortunate thing that we have managed to capture this young bull," said Jack; "for it seems to me that we shall not be able to recover our run-away donkey. We shall possess in its place a capital substitute to yoke with our cow. I fancy I can almost see them at Falcon's Nest."

"You are going a little too fast my lad," I replied, "unless you wish



to take the animal on your back and carry it like Milo of Cretona, for otherwise I must say I do not see how you are to get it away from here."

"Oh, yes!" said Jack, "I know very well that if I were a Samson or a Hercules I could very soon take it home, but—"

"Oh, that fatal, that eternal but," I replied; "it always opposes an obstacle to our best projects, and it ought to be banished from the language."

"Surely the buffalo can walk very well by itself," said Jack.

"Yes," I replied; "but if we were to give it its liberty it would most probably walk away by itself from us in the same manner as the ass has done."

"But surely the dogs would keep it in check."

"But you forget that Turk and Bill are not trained like shepherd's dogs."

"But," said Jack, "I mean——"

"But, but," it is always but; but we may chatter here for a long time without advancing a hair's breadth nearer to a conclusion. The best thing will be to slide the rope round his limbs a little so that he may hobble along, but he will not be able to run away and escape us. I have an idea in my head that we may be able to tame him, and I shall try to do so in the manner which the natives employ to subdue buffaloes."

As I spoke, I drew from my pocket my knife, which possessed a very sharp and pointed blade; then holding the buffalo down very tightly, I caused the two dogs to seize his ears so that he could not move; and then holding his nostrils tightly in one hand, with the other I slit the cartilage of his nose and passed the cord through the hole. The ends of the rope were then promptly fastened to a stake, to which the animal was attached until the bleeding of the nose had ceased. When that was over, and the dogs had once more let the animal go, he got up and made an attempt to escape; but the slightest twitch of the cord through his nose occasioned him very great pain, so that he was quickly subdued and glad to be quiet. Subsequently, when I attempted to lead him, he followed me in the most docile manner possible, and I was now convinced that we should be able to take him to Falcon's Nest without any trouble.

However, before we started on our way home, we thought it would be better to attempt to cut away some of the best parts of the dead buffalo close beside us. I managed to extract the tongue, and as we always carried some salt with us to sprinkle any potatoes or game which we might eat *en route*, I put a handful of it on the tongue to keep it sweet. I also detached many fine steaks with the hide on, which we spread out for a few moments in the sun to dry. I afterwards cut off as well as I could the skin from the legs, as I had read that American trappers use this portion of the hide to make boots and shoes.

All this accomplished to our satisfaction, we retired to the shade of the reeds to get a little rest, and to feast our eyes upon the beautiful scenery while we enjoyed a modest repast. Meanwhile the dogs feasted upon the buffalo, which we abandoned to them as a reward for their courage. But our brave defenders were not permitted to enjoy their meal very long undisturbed, for scarcely had they commenced when a flock of vultures and other birds of prey made their appearance in the distance, and displayed the greatest desire to partake of the prey. A sort of general engagement ensued, each individual being jealous of the other, and using all its efforts to drive him away. But as none of them could succeed, they all of them began to gorge themselves with the most

incredible voracity, and we witnessed the spectacle of a free fight which frequently made us laugh heartily.

Amongst these birds I recognised the royal vultures ; the callas, which is also sometimes called the rhinoceros bird, on account of the excrescences upon its beak, and there were also some Indian eagles. If it would have been of any use to us to have possessed any of these birds now, we could have shot any one of them easily ; but as we knew that birds of prey are not very nice eating, we left them to their repose. Jack was very anxious to treat them to a shot or two, but I prevented him, and he gave way to my advice, as I treated him as one treats children under similar circumstances, namely, in providing some other amusement for them. On this occasion I employed him to cut down two reeds which would be very useful to us. While he was doing this we kept admiring the reeds around us, which were very large and high, and I was not sure whether they were the same species as grew near our cabin. Jack took very good care not to cut one of the biggest which was more than a foot in diameter. He contented himself by cutting down some others which were not thicker than my thumb ; he then chopped them up into small pieces between the knots.

While he was thus employed I set about cutting down with a saw, two of the largest I could find, and when I had successfully accomplished this feat I gave the signal for our departure. In consequence of the quantity of things we had to carry, and the advanced hour of the day, it was useless to think of making any further search for the ass. We were also obliged to return to the rest of the family, to whom our lengthened absence might have caused considerable anxiety.





CHAPTER XXI.

A Young Jackal.—The Mischievous Apes.—A Young Eagle.—Manioc flour.—The Old Sow again.—Training the Eagle.—The Secret.



IN order that we might proceed more quickly I passed a cord round the horns of the young buffalo in addition to the one I had put through its nostrils, and after a little time I succeeded in prevailing upon it to accompany us. I then had an opportunity to perceive how grief tames the wildest animals, for the calf followed me without any great difficulty, and I was now hopeful of being able to rear it. While it was walking quietly beside me, it occurred to me that we might be able to make it carry some of the things with which we were laden, and in this we succeeded beyond our expectations; he made no resistance when we placed upon his back a bundle of reeds, and the meat and hide of the buffalo. In this manner we left our camping-place, and soon reached the defile between the river and the edge of rocks in which were so many deep caves. Suddenly a jackal appeared in front of us, and so quick was he that he had disappeared again almost before we caught sight of him; but our dogs rushed after him immediately, and pursued him so vigorously that he had not time to reach his lair, and was obliged to turn round to defend himself. However, the combat was a very unequal one, for the dogs were well protected from bites by their spiked collars, while one of them wore a regular coat of mail; and their foe on his part was entirely exposed to their attacks. Yet the victory was for some time undecided. As we approached the combatants we perceived that the jackal was a female, and conjectured that she had in all probability exposed herself in order to protect her young, which were no doubt hidden in the cluster of the rocks. Jack wished to enter and search for the young jackals, but I was afraid lest the male should be concealed inside; so, restraining the ardour of my young companion, I

discharged a pistol into the den. As nothing appeared, and we did not hear the least movement, I permitted Jack to advance and make the search he desired. For some time he was unable to distinguish anything in consequence of the profound darkness, but as soon as his eyes had become somewhat accustomed to the gloom, he perceived in the corner of the den a litter of little jackals, and at that instant the dogs that had followed him rushed upon them and tore them to pieces, all except one, which Jack was able to secure, and which he carried out in his arms. The little animal was only about ten or twelve days old.

My son asked me if he might not endeavour to bring it up as Fritz had brought up the monkey. "Perhaps we shall be able to tame it," he said, "and educate it for hunting like a dog, as our dogs are not suited to that in consequence of their want of proper intelligence."

As I made no objection, Jack took my silence for consent, and jumped for joy as he carried the little jackal in his arms, thanking me as warmly for my permission as if I had gratified him with a positive "yes;" he promised to take great care of his new acquisition.

In returning towards the river again, where I had left the buffalo fastened to a tree, I took the opportunity to observe two small palm-trees which were growing alone in the neighbourhood, and I discovered that they were two fig-trees of different species, the like of which we had not before seen; so that in all probability the trees which we had noticed growing here and there in the midst of the reeds, belonged to these species. One of them was about fifteen feet high, the other was somewhat smaller, and both had pointed leaves and were in full flower, so that we had some hope of tasting their fruit very soon. I immediately conceived the idea of employing them in two ways: one was to still further fortify Zeltheim with their assistance, the other to defend the defile in which we found them; so we decided to return there the first opportunity, so that we might dig up a few of the small ones which were growing here and there. I made up my mind that these trees were the king palm, and the spine palm.

We proceeded on our way, and had soon crossed the river. We then struck into the path we had previously followed, and before night-fall we joined our family, who received us with the most lively demonstrations of joy, and asked us a thousand questions respecting the two new guests that we had brought home.

Jack was by no means backward in recounting in detail all the adventures of the day, and he related them with so much energy, and talked so much, that I despaired of hearing anything from my wife as to how they had been employed during our absence. At length I had an opportunity to put a few questions to her, and I was very pleased to learn all that had been done. They had strictly followed my suggestions:

had paid a visit to Cape Disappointment, carried home some wood for our fire during the night, made some new torches, and succeeded in cutting down a large palm, a feat of which I did not believe them capable. They told me they thought the tree was a sago palm. On the other hand, during their absence, our hut had been completely sacked, which, was a cause of great grief to us all. It appeared that while they were away collecting wood, a large troop of monkeys had entered the tent, drunk up all the palm wine which had been stored up in the calabashes,



scattered the potatoes about, carried away the cocoa-nuts, and had so damaged the supports of our cabin that it took the boys more than an hour to repair it on their return.

Fritz presented me afterwards with a young bird of prey which he had taken from a nest on the top of Cape Disappointment during the absence of the pair of birds. It was already strong, and although its feathers had not fully grown, I could perceive from those that were visible, that it did not belong to any of the families of European eagles, for he was already too large, though I had no doubt he was an eagle of some sort. I believed him to be a Malabar eagle; and as that species

is easily tamed, I had some hopes of being able to bring him up like a falcon, and educate him for hunting.

Meantime, Fritz had bandaged its eyes and tied a handkerchief round its wings, otherwise it would have been too savage, and would have made too much noise.

When we had each brought our narratives to a conclusion, my wife remonstrated very strongly against our mania for collecting all sorts of voracious animals which would soon eat us out of house and home; and I was obliged to reassure her by pointing out that the buffalo would be very useful to us if we did not succeed in recovering our donkey. However, I made a rule, which I insisted should be strictly observed that each one of the boys should educate and attend to his own particular pet, because it was a shameful cruelty to take a creature and let it suffer from want of attention so soon as the novelty of its possession had passed. Whoever neglects the animal that is put in his charge, I said, shall not have the care of him any longer; and this was the most terrible threat that I could hold out. As the animals the most easily tamed, and which would be mixed up most in our domestic arrangements, were the fowls, my wife and I determined to constitute ourselves their guardians. As this decision pleased everybody, my wife was somewhat reassured, and the children promised faithfully never to neglect the animals they wished to educate, and to which they had already in a measure become accustomed.

We now thought it was time to light a fire. I threw upon it a quantity of green wood, and suspended above it a large piece of the buffalo flesh, that I had cut off. I gave some of the less savoury portions to the young eagle, and it devoured it with the same relish as the young buffalo and the jackal drank the cow's milk which had been drawn for them.

But milk alone did not satisfy the young buffalo, so we cut up some potatoes, which it devoured eagerly; from this we concluded that the pain of its wounds had already abated, and that the cicatrice in the nose would soon heal.

Our own supper was soon ready, and after the meal we prepared to retire to rest. Our preparations were the same as the night before. We fastened up the young buffalo beside the cow, with which to our great delight he appeared to strike up a friendship very quickly. The dogs once more lay down as outposts; and finally we ourselves retired to our beds of moss and grass, and having lighted the torches, were soon asleep. Our sleep was so long and so deep that the sun was already high in the heavens when we awoke, but nothing had occurred during the night to injure us or our animals.

Immediately after a light breakfast I wished to give the signal for

departure ; but I very soon saw that my boys had something on their minds, and that they were not disposed to leave in such a hurry.

Jack hoped that we would prepare from the palm-tree they had cut down, two wooden aqueducts for Falcon's Nest, which would enable us to carry the water into the tortoise-shell as into a reservoir.

Ernest was anxious to see how sago was prepared, and Fritz was engaged in splitting open the palm-tree.



"The first thing to do," I said, "is to place the palm in an elevated spot where we can work at it conveniently. Then to procure the water to mix with the pith, and finally to prepare some blocks of wood to split open the tree."

"As far as the water is concerned," said my wife, "we shall have some trouble to get it. The river is some distance off, and I have not seen a spring in the neighbourhood."

"Oh, that is no matter," exclaimed Ernest; "I have noticed plenty of the bind-weed around here, so that we can very soon find sufficient water if we only had something to put it in."

"It is not of much consequence," I replied; "we shall not require any great quantity of water at one time. The contents of a small can will be quite sufficient, we can always re-fill it, and if you find more than the can will hold, you can put the remainder into the calabashes."

Ernest went off at these words to seek for water while we prepared the wedges for our great work. We succeeded in placing the palm-tree upon two large branches which kept it raised a little from the ground, and cutting off the top with a saw, we inserted a wedge. This operation was less difficult than we had expected; the wood was not hard, and we soon reached the pith. That was now taken out and pressed, after having excavated one of the ends of the tree sufficiently to serve as a sort of kneading trough. When the cake was of a proper consistency, we attached to one extremity of the tree a tobacco rasp which we had brought with us, and then rubbing the cake of pith upon this, we soon saw the little grains of flour trickling through the holes in the rasp. The preparations gave rise to the greatest joy amongst the children. I told them to turn up their sleeves like regular bakers, and having emptied two cans of water into the hollow of the tree, I told them to begin kneading. They did so most willingly, and my little bakers succeeded much better than I had expected.

In a short time the dough was sufficiently kneaded, and then they rubbed it against the tobacco rasp. The boys were ready with the calabashes to receive the morsels that fell through the holes, and carried the flour thus obtained to their mother, who had spread a piece of canvas in the sun-light, in order to dry it. Thus we were able to procure a good supply of a new sort of food; and we should have been able to make more of it, if to save time we had not thrown away all that we could not immediately use. But the prospect of being able to finish it, and our impatience to carry back to Zeltheim the two halves of the palm-tree, compelled us to proceed more quickly on this occasion than we should otherwise have done. Notwithstanding our haste, however, we did not succeed in finishing our work and placing all the provisions in the palm-tree trunk in our cart before nightfall, so it was necessary to sleep once more in our hut.

The night passed over as quietly as the preceding ones, and very early in the morning we were ready to return to Falcon's Nest.

We made a light breakfast, struck our tent, and started for home. The young buffalo was put to work at once, and harnessed with the cow, not without some resistance on his part; but as I preceded him, and held the cord which we had passed through his nostrils, he very soon became tractable.

We naturally followed the same road by which we had come, with the object of picking up the wax berries which we had collected and stowed away, as well as the india-rubber we hoped to find. I had completely given up all ideas of looking for the hens' eggs with the assistance of the ape, for we were in such a hurry to reach Falcon's Nest where we had a great deal to do before night-fall; most particularly to see how the animals had fared during our absence, and to make good any little deficiencies that might be necessary.

I told Frank and Jack to go on in front with one of the dogs to give warning of any foe, to clear the road, and to prevent us from getting entangled in any thick grass or bushes. This task they accomplished to my entire satisfaction, and we reached without adventure the india-rubber trees, and the place in which we had hidden the wax berries. We halted to put our treasures in the cart. There was not so much india-rubber as I had hoped to collect. The sun penetrating the holes we had made in the tree had dried up the sap too quickly, but we had, at any rate, a sufficient quantity to make an experiment in fashioning a pair of boots.

When we had once more resumed our journey, and while we were traversing the guava wood, our advance guard suddenly gave an alarm, by which we were all more or less terrified, and seeing Fritz and Jack retiring upon the main body, we began to fear that they had encountered at least a panther or a tiger. In support of this idea, Turk began to bark with all his might; and Bill, who had joined him, struck in with such fearful howls, that I flew to their assistance with my sons, quite prepared for an encounter.

When we reached the advance guard, I was astonished to see them halted in front of a thick cluster of bushes, towards which the dogs darted from time to time but did not dare to enter. I thought that perhaps a tiger was crouching within; but Jack, who had glided amongst the trees, and had crept along the ground to see what was there, cried out,—“Oh, it is nothing after all but our old sow again, who is always playing her tricks, and seems to take a delight in frightening us.”

As he spoke, the animal herself confirmed his assertion by an unmistakable grunt; and half-laughing, half-angry, we hurried into the thicket, where we found her surrounded with six or seven little pigs, which could hardly have been more than two days old. We were very much pleased to see them; and the old sow herself appeared to understand that we did not wish to do her any injury, for she welcomed us with a series of the most friendly grunts possible. We rewarded her on the spot with all the potatoes and biscuits we had remaining; and Fritz and Jack went so far as to stroke her, while they looked forward with pleasure to the excellent little sucking pigs which she had supplied them, and which

would be so nice for dinner. They descanted with great spirit on the delicacy of the sucking pig, and how good it would be to eat, till their mother was obliged to put a stop to their greedy anticipations. It is hardly necessary to say that they consulted as to what should be done with the wild sow; and as a matter of course, each one made a different suggestion. Some of the party wished to kill all the little pigs; others wished to kill the mother the very first time we wanted bacon; two more of the party proposed to carry the whole of the little family home with us. Fritz was of opinion that it was better to leave them to multiply in the desert, so that they might furnish us with some hunting in the future. But I finally decided that the little pigs should be left till they were a little older; that we should then take two of them to rear at Falcon's Nest, and let the others roam about as they liked. This opinion pleased all parties. We left the animals where they were and reached Falcon's Nest without any further incident, and were very glad indeed to get home again.

We found everything there in a most satisfactory state. All our stock, quadruped as well as biped, were safe and in good condition, and gave evidence by their cries of the pleasure they experienced in our reappearance. We placed our latest acquisitions in the quarter we judged most suitable for them. We first tied up the young buffalo and jackal, in the hope that they would soon become tame. Fritz's eagle was also attached to a branch in the neighbourhood of the little paraquet, a long cord was tied to its foot, and its hood was removed. As soon as this had been taken away, the bird displayed such fury that we were quite alarmed; and its aspect was so terrible that all the poultry immediately took to flight. But the poor little paraquet, which was nearest, was not able to make its escape, and was torn to pieces before we had time to rush to its assistance. Fritz flew into a terrible passion, and wished to kill the eagle at once. Ernest however interfered, and begged him to let it live, for he had hopes of being able to bring it up and tame it like a falcon. "Give me your eagle," he said to Fritz, "I know very well how to tame it, and to make it as tractable as a little dog."

"Oh, yes! I dare say," replied Fritz; "but it is my bird, and I am not going to give it up so easily as all that. You can just as well tell me how you propose to tame it; and indeed I shall think it very mean on your part if you do not."

"Gently, gently," I said, interposing between the disputants; "you ought not to reproach your brother when you yourself were in the wrong. You are like the dog in the manger. You will not eat the hay yourself, and you will not permit the hungry ox to eat it either. Ernest only asks you for a bird which you are not able to tame, and which you were about to kill just now; while you wish to keep the bird, and imagine



EAGLES AND VULTURES.

that your brother has no right to keep his secret. Which of you suffers most,—you, who do not wish to give up that which you do not know what to do with; or Ernest, who does not wish to communicate a secret by

the revelation of which he can derive no benefit. If you do not wish to keep your eagle, you ought at least to offer him something in return for his secret. If then Ernest wishes you to have it for nothing, so much the better for you."

"You are right, papa," replied Fritz; "I will give him my ape if he likes. The eagle is a brave bird, and I should like to keep it. What do you say, Ernest?"

"I agree willingly," said Ernest, "for I have no pretension to heroism, it is quite enough for me to be a philosopher; so I will sing of the mighty deeds which you and your eagle will accomplish together."

"It is very possible," replied Fritz, "that we may give you something to do in that direction; but first tell me how I shall be able to tame my eagle, or, at any rate, how I can keep it quiet."

"I am not quite certain, of course," said Ernest, "of the entire efficacy of the means which I am about to communicate, but I believe it will succeed with your eagle equally as it has succeeded with the parrots in America. All you have to do is to light your pipe and puff the smoke under his beak, until he is quite stupid or half-tipsy with the fumes. His ferocity will very soon be calmed after that."

"Ah! ah!" cried Fritz, "is that all your great secret? Indeed, I am not going to give up my monkey for that; it is a regular take in, papa."

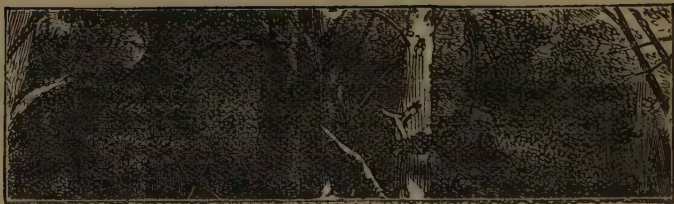
"It appears to me," said I, "that you are too hasty in your statements. The plan does not appear to me at all a bad one, and the least you can do is to give it a trial. If you fail, Ernest will at once acknowledge that he does not deserve payment for useless advice; but I believe that the idea is a good one, for a similar plan is pursued with bees when people wish to take the honey without running the risk of being stung."

"Oh! if that is so," said little Frank, "let us go and smoke out the bees which I saw in the great tree over there, so that we need not be afraid of them when we take the honey."

"Yes, my boy," I replied, "you remind me of something which will be very useful to us. We will make the attempt the very first opportunity. Meantime, let Fritz make the experiment with his eagle."

Fritz then fetched a pipe and some tobacco from an officer's trunk, and set himself to smoke gravely under the very nose of the eagle, and now and then gave him such strong whiffs that in a short time the bird became perfectly motionless, and appeared to be dead.

It was then unanimously resolved that Ernest deserved the reward he had been promised for his good advice; and the result showed how efficacious the smoking had been, for the bird became tamer every day, and even the very next night he remained perfectly quiet on his perch, and we were enabled to enjoy uninterrupted sleep. After the success of this experiment we felt more comfortable.



CHAPTER XXII.

Supporting our Trees.—Grafting.—A Staircase in our Tree.—A Swarm of Bees.—
The Bee-hives.—The Bees make themselves at home.



T a very early hour next morning we set about to carry out the project which we had for some time been considering, viz., to provide our young trees with the required supports. We accordingly set out with a cart full of bamboos, and supplied with the necessary tools for excavating the ground ; my wife and Frank only remained at home to prepare us a good dinner—that is to say, a palm cabbage, and to melt down the wax berries.

On this occasion the services of the young buffalo were dispensed with. I wished to give his nose the opportunity to heal completely ; and besides, the cow was quite sufficient for the work we had in hand. Before our departure we gave the young animal a good handful of grass, so as to accustom it to being fed by us, and to our presence ; and this plan was so successful that the captive was quite anxious to follow us, but we did not permit it to do so.

Our work began at a very short distance from Falcon's Nest, at the entrance of the path that led to Zeltheim. The nut-trees, the chestnuts, and the cherry-trees were all bent down by the force of the wind ; so we set to work to straighten them up again, and supported them by the bamboos we had brought with us. We afterwards planted the tall reeds and fastened them together with the bind-weed.

This occupation naturally gave rise to some conversation respecting the mode of training trees ; and the boys, who up to that time had been rather restless, took an extraordinary interest in the process, and put questions which I at times had some little difficulty in answering. However, I told them all I knew ; and I was glad to see that they listened attentively to all I had to say, and appeared desirous to profit by what little information I was able to communicate.

My explanations were frequently interrupted by quaint remarks and most unexpected questions, and by which each of the children unconsciously developed his own peculiarities of character and taste.

"Are the trees we have planted here the same as we find growing naturally?" asked Fritz; "or are they the result of cultivation; and if so, how has the result been obtained?"

"Just hear him," exclaimed Jack. "He talks as if trees were just like animals,—some wild, some tame. Perhaps we are in hopes of discovering some way to tame them, as you have done your eagle; and hope to teach them to bow politely to you, so that you may pluck their fruit!"

"I dare say, my poor Jack," I replied, "you imagine that you have said a very clever thing; but let me tell you that you are only a little



simpleton. Of course there are no trees that will bow down to their owners; but if there are trees which grow wild by themselves, there are, on the other hand, some which undergo a complete education in order to be improved and to yield better fruit. Since you put all animals in the same category, I ought, as you are not yet docile, to put a cord through your nose, as I have done in the case of the little buffalo."

"But would not that be rather a strong measure," observed Ernest, maliciously.

"Yes," I replied, smiling; "but a means I ought to adopt with all of you, not even excepting the Professor himself. But as men are treated differently from the lower animals, so there are some means employed to modify the nature of certain vegetables; this is done by grafting, transplanting, manuring, and generally, all those means which together constitute agriculture."

I then proceeded to explain that the greater part of our fruit-trees were of foreign origin,—for instance, the olive came from Palestine; the peach from Persia; the fig-tree is from Libya; the apricot from

Armenia; the prune from Syria; the pear-tree from Greece. I also added that many others have been cultivated in our native land for many years, so that they might almost be assumed to be indigenous.

This conversation continued until we had finished our work; and as it was then noon, we returned hungry as wolves to Falcon's Nest, where our good housekeeper had prepared a most savory repast for us, which was principally composed of palm cabbage. We ate heartily, and afterwards enjoyed a very necessary rest. My wife and I then took the opportunity to consult upon a plan which we had had at heart for a long time.

We had frequently experienced a very great difficulty, not unattended with danger, when climbing up to our aerial bed-chamber, and descending by means of our rope ladder. An accident might occur at any time, for the children went up so rashly, and even in our own case a false step might cause us to fall. We had previously spoken of this on many occasions, and my wife often impressed upon me the necessity to provide an easier and safer means of access. But I had always laughed at her confidence in my inventive genius, saying, "I should be very happy to do anything she wished; and I would very willingly construct a convenient staircase by which to mount up into our tree, if only I had at my disposal some magic power, or some good genius at my orders; but as I was nothing more than a weak man, I did not feel capable of accomplishing superhuman work." Nevertheless her reiterated requests, joined to the actual necessities of the case, had caused me to reflect very seriously if there were not some other means by which we could reach our stronghold more easily.

After all, the rope ladder still appeared to be the safest; for the tree was too high, and the sum of our little forces too little to give us any hope that we should be able to construct a staircase in less than two years, even if we worked every day; so the question now was whether we could not make one inside the trunk of the tree.

This idea, which had already occupied my mind for many days, was now promulgated and discussed after dinner.

"Did you not tell me, my dear," I said to my wife, "that there is a hole in the trunk of the tree which seems to be the opening to a bees' nest? There is really an opening at a certain height, and I have often seen the bees go in and out; so it is necessary to ascertain if this hole extends to the foot of the tree, and what its dimensions are, for that will be very useful for our project."

This proposition immediately set the children all on the alert; they got up and rushed at the roots of the tree, climbing like so many squirrels to a sufficient height to examine the aperture from whence the bees came, and to discover what its depth might be. But the blows of the hatchets and the hammer cost the stupid lads dear, for a swarm of

bees flew angrily from their nest, attacked the boys, and stung them in all directions; some remaining attached to their hair or their clothes, while others pursued them as they fled in terror. They would very soon have disappeared from us altogether if we had not called them back; and we were then able to alleviate their stings with an application of damp earth.

Jack, who was the first to examine the nest, had been terribly stung, and his face was much swollen. Ernest, on the contrary, thanks to his lethargic nature, had only received one sting, for he ascended last of all, and took care to drop down the moment he saw the bees come out.

Quite an hour had elapsed before the pain was sufficiently assuaged to enable us to recommence the work, but this time with more caution.

The boys were all so enraged against the brave bees that they insisted



upon attacking their enemy immediately. So while the bees were still buzzing around the tree, I prepared some tobacco, some clay, and a cane tube. I then took a hammer and saw, and I made with a calabash, which was provided with an opening, a very pretty little hive which I placed on a branch of our tree, and covered it with a straw roof to protect it from the sun and the rain. These preparations occupied a longer time than I had counted upon, so it was necessary to put off the attack till the following morning.

The impatience exhibited by the children woke me very early. The day was scarcely breaking when I commenced operations. I began by filling up the hole in the tree by which the bees came in and out, so that there was only just sufficient room to insert the stem of my pipe. Having covered my head with an apron, I began to smoke, and continued to puff into the nest until I thought that all the bees must be

stupefied. As I had no mask nor gauntlets I wished to render them perfectly insensible, so that I might not be stung in the operation. At first we heard a great buzzing inside the tree, but by degrees it grew less audible, and at length ceased altogether.

I then withdrew the pipe and commenced the attack. Fritz had climbed up close to me, and armed with saws and hammers we commenced to detach a piece of the trunk about three feet high and two broad, so that it was only held in position by a small piece of the bark. I then recommenced to smoke into all the cells, because I was afraid that the first action of the tobacco might pass away; we soon cut away the piece altogether, and the interior of the tree was exposed to our view.

We were perfectly astonished at the magnificent honeycombs; there was such a tremendous quantity of wax and honey that we did not know what to do with it, and we did not think we had sufficient vessels to put it into. I cut off the combs one after another, and scarcely had I made a little aperture than I placed the bees into a gourd which I had prepared for their reception. The remainder of the honeycomb I distributed in the numerous vessels with which my children had supplied me.

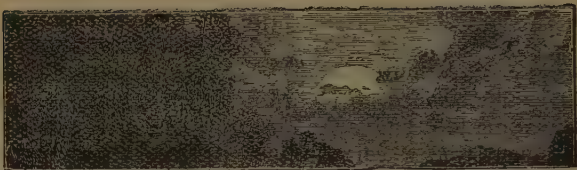
As soon as I had finished all this, I descended from the tree and set about to clean out a small cask. This cask I filled with our honeycomb, first taking a little for our present use. I then rolled the barrel aside and covered it well with canvas, and with planks and leaves, so that the bees might not find it out. Finally, I got up into our room, and fixing my little hive on a plank, I stretched above it my straw covering. I re-descended, and we found the honey so good that we could not eat enough of it. However, a single observation sufficed to put an end to our banquet. I told my children that the bees would very soon wake from their stupor, and that they would furiously attack the spoilers of their hive if they could discover them. The children did not wait to be told this twice, and they hastened to conceal their share of the honey as well as they could. But I thought that without doubt the bees when they awoke would return to their former habitation, and would very soon re-establish themselves there if they were not prevented. I then took two handfuls of tobacco and a small plank with some clay loam on it. I mounted the tree towards the hole, and by means of the plank I was enabled to fix the tobacco at different parts, and when lighted it gave forth a thick smoke. This led me to hope that the bees would give up the idea of returning to their former dwelling, and that they would leave the hollow tree for ever.

I was not disappointed in my conjecture; for although when they first awoke the bees attempted to regain their old home, the tobacco

smoke always caused them to retire, and finally they entered the little calabash hive, and seemed to regard it as their future dwelling. We waited till morning to examine the interior of the tree, and as the presence of so many bees which still buzzed around prevented us from preparing our honey and separating it from the wax, we laid down to sleep a little, so as to be able to get up during the night and occupy ourselves in the preparation of our spoil.

So soon as evening had set in, and the chilliness of the air compelled the bees to return to their hive, we arose and commenced our work. All the combs were taken from the little cask, put in the caldron, mixed with a small quantity of water, and placed upon the fire until it was all melted down. In order to purify it we strained it through muslin, and placed it once again in the barrel, and left it to cool for the remainder of the night. Next morning we found the wax floating on the surface, and were able to take it off with ease. The honey remained in the cask, which was carefully put away in the excavation which served as a wine cellar.





CHAPTER XXIII.

Construction of the Staircase.—Lambs and Kids.—The Buffalo Trained.—Taming the Eagle.—White Wax and Yellow.—Boot-making.



SOON as we had accomplished the transfer of the bees into the hive, and collected in our vessels what had been left in the tree, we proceeded to inspect the interior of the trunk. After having sounded it in every direction, I was convinced that the fig-tree which we had chosen for our habitation resembled an European willow, and after it had attained a certain growth it was only kept alive by the nourishment extracted from the bark; so it was not at all difficult to construct the staircase we contemplated within the hollow trunk.

The cavity was so spacious that I was able to fasten in the midst the post which would serve as a pivot upon which our staircase must rest; and satisfied with the result of my scrutiny, I announced to my boys the work upon which for the present we should be engaged. But before I set about this I thought it better to separate the wax from the honey which we had taken from the bees.

As we could not carry out this work properly in their neighbourhood without running the risk of their attacking us and disputing the possession of the honey; and as besides this the children seemed somewhat exhausted, we thought it would be better to take a short rest before we set to work. At night, therefore, we resumed our occupation, and took advantage of the bees being asleep, to prepare the honey, which we placed in large caldrons submitted to the action of a slow fire, when it was soon liquefied, and the wax once more floated on the top. We then took care to separate it from the honey and put it on one side for the manufacture of our wax candles. As soon as it was daylight we set about the construction of our staircase, and at first sight it certainly appeared to me an undertaking beyond our strength. But I reflected that there were very few obstacles which could not be overcome by intelligence, patience, and perseverance; and I was not sorry to find



opportunities which would develop in my sons these useful and noble qualities,—essential conditions to success in every human enterprise. I was glad to be able to provide them with occupations which, while they improved their strength, both morally and physically, at the same time prevented them from thinking too much of their native land, and of the enjoyment they had left behind them.

We commenced our work by cutting in the side of the tree, facing the sea, an opening of the same size exactly as the door which we had brought away from the captain's cabin on the wreck, and which we had removed, with its hinges, etc. We then cleaned out the interior of the tree, into which the light had already penetrated through the opening which we had made to take out the honey. I made two other apertures at about equal distances from each other. To these openings I fitted three windows which we had fortunately brought home from the wreck. We then made some deep incisions in the interior part of the tree, which we intended for the support of the steps of our staircase. We drove into the centre of the hollow of the tree a stem of about ten feet high, around which I made grooves corresponding with those in the exterior trunk. We then placed the steps in these notches, and when we had arrived at the top of the smaller tree, we raised a second trunk upon the first, which we fixed with large iron clamps, and thus we proceeded until we reached our sleeping chambers. I must beg the reader to understand that we made a number of attempts before we succeeded in accomplishing this work, and that our frequent failures severely tried our patience and courage. It was not until after a lapse of three weeks' hard work that our staircase was finished and pronounced practicable.

This accomplishment of our hopes delighted us all beyond measure, particularly the boys, who were never tired of running up and down the staircase and admiring it. It was by no means well-made, but was sufficient for our need; and that was quite enough. I then understood how necessary it was to include in a man's education a knowledge of some useful trade.

A short time after we had finished the construction of our staircase, the dog we called Bill presented us with six puppies, and very pretty little dogs they were; but as we did not wish to bring up such a large number, I made up my mind to keep only two, a male and a female. The other four were drowned in the sea, and their place was taken by the little jackal. The mother did not appear to notice the substitute, and nursed the stranger quite as good-naturedly as she did her own little ones.

About the same time our goats presented us with two kids, and the sheep brought forth fine lambs; and we were very much delighted to see such an increase in flocks and herds. But for fear that some day a

other these animals would take it into their heads to run away from us, as the ass had done, we hung round the necks of the goats and lambs some small bells, a great number of which we had found on the wreck, which the captain had brought for the purpose of exchange with the native tribes. Thanks to these precautions, we hoped that if any one of the animals did take it into its head to stray, we should easily recover it, and bring it back again. The young buffalo had taken us some time to train; the incision I had made in its nose was now pretty well healed, and I was able to pass a small stick through the nostrils, by the aid of which I managed to guide him with reins as with a bit. But he did



not submit without some very considerable remonstrance; nevertheless, I rendered him sufficiently tame to put up with some of our loads which we wished to carry from place to place; and by degrees, when I had stretched a thick covering over his back, I accustomed him to carry a burden equal to that formerly carried by the ass. I also wished that he would allow himself to be ridden; and we constrained the monkey to make the first experiment of this nature,—he was so light and so sharp, clung so tightly, and preserved his equilibrium so well, that the most violent bounds the buffalo could make would not be able to dislodge his obstinate rider; and finally, the boys themselves attempted to make use of this Bucephalus. First Fritz, then Ernest, then Jack, and,



THE GOLDEN EAGLE.

subsequently, even little Frank himself, took riding lessons on the buffalo's back. Having conquered his resistance, they would be able in future to mount the most restive horse; and at length, the animal, from having been so savage and rebellious, proved to be most docile and affectionate, and manifested great pleasure when any of my sons approached him. He would trot or gallop, just as they wished; but in the latter case, it always afforded us the most intense amusement.

However, all this time Fritz had not neglected the education of the eagle, which had already learned to pounce upon the dead birds which his young master placed before him; but Fritz did not wish to let it go free just yet, lest his instinct should induce him to make his escape altogether. Ernest himself, notwithstanding his laziness, had set himself a task which had formerly devolved upon Fritz, namely, the education of the monkey, and to endeavour to restrain in some measure his capricious movements, and to make him somewhat more useful than he had hitherto been. It was a most amusing sight to contrast the calmness and *sang-froid* of the instructor, with the grimaces and gambols of the pupil while his lessons continued. However, Ernest would not give way, and he constructed a little pannier of bark which he fastened over Master Knips' back, and by exercise of patience and firmness he accustomed the ape to have various things put into it to carry to different places and deposit them there. So Master Knips, who at first went into a terrible passion at the very sight of the pannier, now became so reconciled to it that he never wished to go without it.

Jack had less success in the training of his jackal, to which he had given the name of Hunter; but this animal, still retaining his wild habits, only hunted for his own satisfaction, or, at least, he only brought back to his master the skin of the animal of which he had previously devoured the flesh. Nevertheless, Jack continued his efforts to complete the animal's education—a difficult task—with a zeal and persistence which I greatly admired, more particularly as I had not hitherto believed the boy capable of such application.

While my boys were thus occupying themselves heart and soul in the taming of the various animals, I, on my part, was by no means idle. I had perfected the manufacture of the candles, and by rolling them between two planks, I succeeded in giving them the exact roundness and polish of European candles. But when I came to make the wicks, I had a great deal of trouble. I had hitherto employed the fibres of the carrata-tree; but it carbonized while burning. I then endeavoured to replace it by using the pith of a species of alder-tree which grew in the neighbourhood. When I exhibited my finished work to my assembled family, I was greeted with general approbation. Ernest only expressed some regret that the candles were not as white as those we

had been accustomed to use in Europe. "They might have been very much prettier," he said.

"But," observed Jack, "in Europe we have white wax, while here it is quite yellow."

"Oh, oh," laughed Fritz, "I should like to see some white wax very much indeed. I only hope we may find any bees which will make wax as white as that in candles; I would sell it at a high price, and should make a good deal of money out of it."

"However," I replied, "the little fellow is not so very far wrong; for wax, when it first comes from the bee's body is perfectly white and clear, but the vapours which arise in the hive and the contact with the honey very soon alter its appearance, and give it the yellowish colour, to which the long sojourn in the hive adds the dirty and disagreeable tint."

"And how do they proceed in order to bring it back to its original whiteness?" asked Fritz.

"They blanch it," I replied.

"They blanch it," he repeated; "how? Is it the same way they blanch linen?"

"Something the same manner—that is to say, they employ water; and then they dry the wax in the sun, and after some exposure, the wax, like the linen, loses its yellowish colour."

"Well done," cried Jack; "it appears to me that all we have got to do is to dip our candles in water and expose them to the rays of the sun, and our candles will become as white as snow."

"One moment, my boy," I said. "You believe everything practicable; and when one speaks of any new operation in your hearing, you are always ready to make the experiment without taking the trouble to consider the difficulties attendant upon it, and this blanching is by no means so easy to accomplish as you may imagine from my explanation. In the first place, a great quantity of water must be used to reduce the wax into very small pieces, and it must even be submitted to the action of a mill; so you see it would be necessary to go through a great deal of work before you could hope to obtain such pure and transparent candles as those we get in Europe; and after all, if these are less elegant, they are quite suitable for our purpose, and I think it is much wiser to employ our strength and our labour in other enterprises which are more useful, if they are less ornamental."

As night was now approaching, I lit two candles the wicks of which were of different make, in order that I might decide respecting them. The unanimous verdict was that the pith of the alder produced a better light than that of the carrata-tree. This point once settled, I set about working on the india-rubber we had collected. I proposed to make a

pair of boots, and I filled a pair of socks with dry sand to form moulds for them. This process, of which I have already spoken, is the same as is employed in the manufacture of the india-rubber bottles that are sent to Europe. I completed these boots by adapting to them a pair of soles made of the skin of the buffalo we had killed some weeks before, and it appeared to me that the boots were quite as useful as those turned out by a first-rate boot-maker.

My sons were very envious of my success, and asked me to make boots for them as well, and I promised to make the attempt; but as this would be a somewhat laborious undertaking, I wished as a first step to assure myself of the durability of my new boots before I complied with their request. Meantime, I made as well as I could a pair of shoes for Fritz out of the buffalo skin, but I only succeeded after repeated efforts in making a most tiresome and disagreeable foot covering, in which my son ran great risk of breaking his leg, and from which he very soon asked me to relieve him. I complied, to his great satisfaction.

I also made use of our two hollowed parts of the palm-tree: by means of a dam which raised the water at the turn of the stream, we soon had the pleasure of seeing a little artificial river running through our kitchen garden, and refreshing everything. One-half of the hollow tree was destined to supply the basin we had formed from the tortoise-shell, which Fritz intended to be used as a sort of fountain for the family requirements.

Thus by degrees the imprints of civilization were observable all round us, our ease was more and more secured, and we were in a fair way of obtaining by hard work many of the things which were considered necessary to the comfort of Europeans, and which had at first appeared quite out of our reach. We were indeed constrained to offer thanks to Providence for the blessings His protecting hand had bestowed in having saved us from the death which had overtaken our companions; and Who did not cease to shower upon us the blessings of life ever since we had taken possession of the desert island which appeared likely to be our future home.





CHAPTER XXIV.

The Onagra.—Return of the Ass.—Taming the Onagra.—Harness.—Approach of the Rainy Season.—A Nest of Heath Fowl.—New Zealand Flax.—The Rains set in.—Indoor Work.



NE morning, while we were engaged in the completion of our staircase, we heard in the distance a series of curious and prolonged sounds. We could not at first determine from which direction the noises came, nor from what animal they could proceed.

However, our dogs, which had taken the alarm as well as ourselves, pricked up their ears, growled furiously, and appeared to be quite ready for the expected combat; so I told my children to return to their habitation in the tree, while we loaded the guns and made every preparation to resist the coming attack. We all remained on the *qui vive*, glancing anxiously around on all sides, but could not perceive our enemy although the unearthly sounds appeared to come nearer and nearer; and our dogs, more restless than ever, were in readiness to rush upon the enemy as soon as he made his appearance.

At length I made up my mind to descend from our citadel and to inspect the animals, which were all close at hand, and which the dogs, still armed with their spiked collars, etc., watched over with the greatest care. Having completed my inspection I returned to our aërial castle, and we spent much time in guessing what sort of an animal it could be that thus disturbed us.

Jack was decidedly of opinion that the noise was the roar of a lion.

"How delightful," he exclaimed, true to his warlike temperament,—
"how delightful, if it is really a lion. We shall then have the pleasure of meeting the king of beasts, the bravest and the most generous of all animals."

"Generous!" I replied; "do not depend too much upon his gene-

osity, my boy. I would much rather insure my life in this citadel in the tree than depend upon my chances of his mercy. But I can assure you at once that the noise does not proceed from a lion: the sounds are too sharp; the roar of a lion would be more profound and more majestic."

"Perhaps," suggested Fritz; "the noise proceeds from a herd of



THE HYENA.

jackals which are coming to avenge the death of their friends at our hands."

"I rather think that they are hyænas," said Ernest; "the noise is as frightful as the beast itself is."

Little Frank was of opinion that the cries arose from a band of savages who had arrived upon the island in order to feast upon their human victims,

At this moment a roar of laughter from Fritz put a stop to our conjectures.

"I see it!" he cried. "I can perceive the formidable foe. It is nothing more nor less than our old donkey, which, no doubt repenting of his desertion, has come back again to say how sorry he is."

This unexpected termination to our anxiety surprised us not a little. We sat quite mute, and looked at each other in a somewhat shamefaced manner; and at the first moment I think we all rather regretted that some wild animal had not made its appearance instead of the poor donkey.

But it was he, after all, there was no mistaking him now; and as he approached, all doubt of his perfect identity was removed, for he set up a most unmistakable "hee-haw" as he came near, which quite set at rest any lingering doubts that might have intruded themselves respecting him. But he did not return unattended. We soon distinguished another cry, something like the truant donkey's voice, but different from it. The other animal now made his appearance. He seemed to be of the same species as our old donkey, but he was of a more graceful form. He seemed to possess the strength and almost the form of the horse.

I at once recognised in the new arrival the onagra, or koulán, one of the most beautiful quadrupeds of those deserted regions, and I immediately set about to find some means by which we might gain possession of him.

I desired the children not to make the slightest noise. We then descended from the tree and approached the animals with the greatest caution.

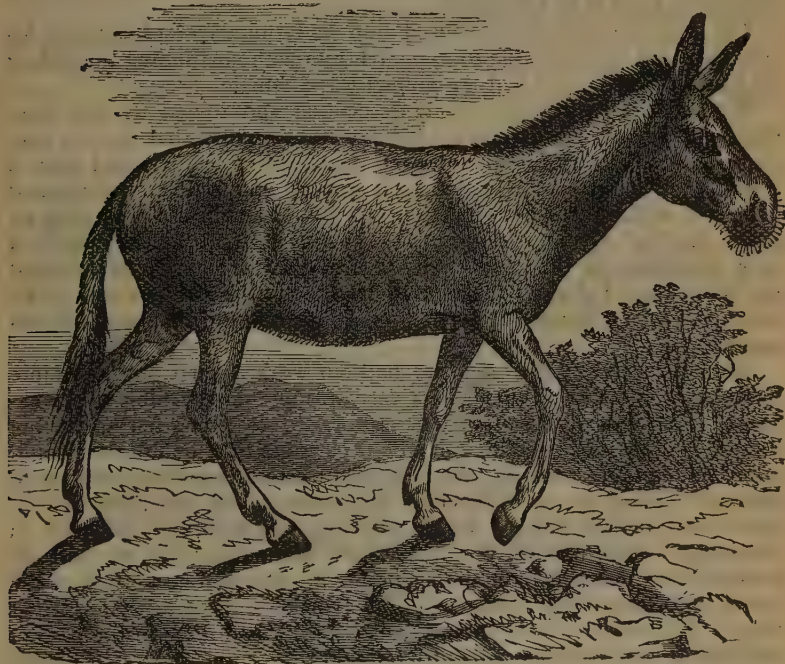
Naturalists pretend that it is quite impossible to tame this beautiful animal. At any rate I was very desirous to make the attempt, and determined, if ordinary means did not succeed, to have recourse to an expedient which I had heard was infallible, and so I immediately set about putting the first plan in practice.

Taking a long rope I made a running noose at one end. I then split up a bamboo in half and joined the separate portions with a piece of string very nearly to their whole length, so as to obtain a sort of strong pincers for the beast's nose. The other end I fastened to the tree.

Fritz inspected my preparations with much curiosity, but he thought I was a very long time about them, and in his impatience he asked whether it would not be a much more simple and a very much shorter plan to take the onagra with his lasso. But in this instance I deprecated the employment of the Patagonian method; for notwithstanding Fritz's acknowledged skill in the use of his weapon, I was afraid that he might miss his aim, and that the animal would at once make his escape.

and we should not find him again, for all naturalists are agreed that the onagra possesses a very high degree of speed.

In order to recompense Fritz, however, as soon as I had arranged the running noose, I desired him as the most skilful and active of the party to pass the rope over the head of the onagra. I hid myself behind the tree while my son cautiously advanced alone. He quickly approached the wild animal, which probably had never before seen a



THE ONAGRA.

human creature, and at first he stepped back as if frightened at the lad's appearance. But as Fritz remained perfectly motionless, the onagra soon got over his alarm and began to graze again.

The donkey, however, had perceived that Fritz held a handful of corn mixed with salt, and he approached him without hesitation to enjoy a meal. The onagra, encouraged by this example, also made his approaches, and scarcely had he come within reach than Fritz adroitly cast the noose over his head.

The moment he felt the rope upon his neck he bounded backwards; but too late, he was already a prisoner, and all his efforts to release himself only resulted in his becoming more hopelessly entangled, as the noose got tighter and tighter.

At length the strain was so severe that the onagra fell to the ground, his tongue hanging from his mouth, and he seemed choking. I at once hurried up and loosened the knot, and threw the donkey's halter over his neck. Then making use of the pincers I had fashioned from the bamboo, I fixed it to his nostrils.

The pain this operation caused him had the effect of calming his struggles, and we were able to approach him without running the risk of a kick. We perceived that the animal was a female.

Now all the rest of the family descended and joined us, and were unceasing in their admiration for the beautiful animal that we had conquered; but the onagra did not even then seem to understand that it was a captive. In a few moments it got up on its feet, and seemed delighted at this display of its strength; but the pain the pincers in its nose caused it soon made it quiet again, and it stood perfectly still. I took advantage of the opportunity to fasten it more securely, while at the same time I desired my wife to lead away the deserter and to tie him up in such a manner as his escape in future would be a very difficult matter.

But it was very evident that we had our work cut out for us to tame the onagra, and that it would be a very tiresome undertaking to accomplish. The boys were already looking forward to riding her about, but they very soon perceived that it would be some time before they could enjoy such an amusement. We had recourse to a thousand methods to tame her; every day we macerated the poor animal, and tied her up tighter and tighter, but all to no purpose; we could not succeed in obtaining, I will not say the least show of docility, for we had no evidence even of submission on her part. So soon as one portion of the bonds were loosed she became as wild as ever, and perfectly savage at times. I put heavy loads upon her back, as I had done in the case of the buffalo, and kept her without food. Master Knips, who had played such a successful part in the education of the calf, also essayed to mount the onagra, but in vain. For two days we were quite discouraged, and we gravely discussed the question whether it would not be better to give the animal her liberty again, than to exhaust ourselves and waste much valuable time in a struggle in which we had no apparent prospect of success.

There still remained, however, a last resource—that to which I have already referred—which I had heard spoken of as infallible, but in which I had no great faith, nevertheless. This method was to bite the ear of

the animal until blood flowed, and cruel as this proceeding appeared to be, I determined to make the attempt. It succeeded completely. The animal became at once docile and submissive. I mounted upon her back and rode her as I pleased. Fritz then made the attempt, and Jack with the assistance of his mother, placed himself behind him.

This success pleased us all extremely, and the boys were very loud in their demonstrations of joy.

When the excitement had in some degree calmed down, I told Fritz that I would make over the onagra to him, and that in future he was to look upon her as his property. I felt very pleased when I saw my son speeding away down the avenue at Falcon's Nest on the beautiful courser I had tamed for him; but as a matter of precaution I hobbled



the onagra's fore-legs with a loose cord, so that she was not able to put forth her utmost speed. I adapted a snaffle which succeeded tolerably well, and instead of a bit we guided her by striking her gently over one ear or the other according to the direction we wished her to take. From that day she was numbered amongst our domestic animals, and we sought for a name by which she might in future be known. Finally, we pitched upon *Lightfoot* as most appropriate, and never did any animal better deserve the appellation.

My wife was very anxious to know how I had become acquainted with the expedient to which we had subjected the onagra; and I then informed her that it was known by horse dealers, and that it is very usually resorted to by a half-savage race who inhabit the southern part

of America, and who trade in furs and animals: they frequently bring to the markets, where they negotiate their exchanges, a number of wild horses, which are usually tamed in the same manner as we had tamed the onagra.

While we were training *Lightfoot*, the farmyard had shown a very considerable increase in numbers; a triple hatching of our hens had given us forty little chickens, which already half-deafened us with their chirping. My good wife was most anxious in her care of all these little people, to which she attached much more value than the other animals, for which indeed she had no very great affection. The buffalo, which carried our provisions, was almost the only one of our prizes which she regarded with any favour; but the eagle, the onagra, the jackal, the flamingo, and the monkey, she looked upon as so many useless encumbrances, very voracious consumers of our stores, and from which we could not possibly derive any profit; while on the other hand the hens were most useful, as was evident, for they supplied us with eggs and food for our table. So far from complaining of the increase which the care of forty or fifty young chickens would give her, she appeared all the more satisfied in proportion.

We were now approaching the rainy season, which is the winter in these latitudes, and all the trouble we had taken for the training of our animals would be lost if we could not afford them protection against the inclemency of the weather. For that purpose it was necessary that we should set about the construction of a stable sufficiently large to contain them all; so we formed the framework of the roof out of bamboos, and filled up the interstices with damp clay, and over all this we put a layer of pitch, which rendered the roof so firm that one might have walked on the top of it without any fear of it giving way. The roots of our great tree served for partitions, and with the assistance of some planks we were enabled to form at the foot of our aerial habitation a series of stalls in which the animals could be safely housed, and in which provisions could be placed without interfering with them. All that was necessary for the organization of a small farmyard was thus completed from the outhouses to the hay-loft, and sheds necessary to shelter the store of provisions for the animals. This work was very quickly accomplished, and we then set about collecting our store of provisions. For that purpose we made several excursions into the interior of our domain, and brought back supplies of manioc and potatoes in preference to any other food; but if any edible fruits presented themselves to our notice, or any plants which we thought useful in medicine were observed, we did not disdain to bring them with us.

One evening, when we were all together gathering supplies, we made such an ample collection of potatoes, that the ass and the buffalo were

quite heavily laden. We were preparing to return home, but as the evening was still young, it suddenly occurred to me to let my wife and the younger children go straight home, while I with Ernest and Fritz made an excursion to the oak forest to endeavour to pick up some acorns, and so increase our store.

Ernest had his ape with him, and Fritz was proudly seated upon the onagra. We arrived at the oak forest in due course, but scarcely had we entered it, and commenced our search for the acorns, when master Knips attracted our attention by his cries. He seemed to be occupied



THE BRUSH TURKEY.

in a neighbouring thicket from which other cries proceeded, accompanied by the sound of the continuous flapping of wings. Ernest ran to the spot and quickly called out to us,—

“Here is another discovery, father. Master Knips has pitched upon a beautiful nest of heath-fowl; that he wants to demolish the eggs is very evident, but the male bird has come to the assistance of his wife and little ones, and I have got them all; so come quickly, it is really very curious.”

Fritz immediately sprang through the briers, and joined his brother in the twinkling of an eye. A moment or two later he reappeared, carrying in his arms the cock and hen birds; giving me these to take care of, he ran back to secure the eggs, Ernest in the meantime restraining the monkey, which had a very strong preference for the eggs of these birds.

The eggs were carefully stowed in Ernest's hat, and covered over with a species of long grass, the blades of which were something like swords in appearance. Ernest showed them to me while I was engaged in tying the legs of our captives; he remarked that they would amuse little Frank very much. But I did not pay very much attention to him, as I was so delighted to have secured the cock and hen bird.

We succeeded in filling the bags we had brought with us with acorns, and, placing them on the back of the onagra, we retraced our steps to Falcon's Nest. Fritz, impatient to tell his mother the good news respecting our new acquisition, which he was sure she would welcome with great delight, hastened his steed, for he was still seated upon the onagra between the two bags of acorns. I saw him disappear like lightning; a handful of the long grass which his brother had plucked, and with which he beat the ears of his steed, was the cause of this unusual pace of the onagra. We were both frightened to see him pass at such a great speed between the trees the whole length of our avenue, but he arrived at home without accident, where his mother was delighted to see him, and praised him for his courage and agility.

As we had anticipated, she received our new capture with satisfaction. We gave their eggs to one of the domestic fowls which showed an inclination to sit. The wild chickens made themselves at home in our farm-yard immediately they were hatched, and their own mother was very quickly tamed. In this manner we had achieved a conquest of a new and excellent species of fowl which Fritz and I had encountered once before, but Fritz had unfortunately, on a previous occasion, frightened it away.

The long leaves of the grass with which Ernest had covered the eggs served afterwards for Frank to play with as we had intended; but Fritz, perceiving that they were very flexible, conceived the idea of making them into a whip, by means of which Frank, who had the flock under his immediate superintendence, might correct the mutinous animals at pleasure. He in his turn called my attention to this grass. I examined it accordingly, and very quickly perceived that the supposed grass was the flax plant of New Zealand. I was very glad to make this discovery, but my wife was quite overwhelmed with joy.

"It is surely," she exclaimed, "the most useful, and most fortunate of your discoveries. I can already in imagination see myself making

thread to mend your clothes, which are getting excessively worn and threadbare ; so give me the flax, make me a wheel and spindle, and in a very short time I will make some shirts, trousers, and blouses. Now run along quick and collect all you can find of this precious grass."

Her enthusiasm made me smile. "Patience," I said, "and I hope we shall eventually arrive at the result you anticipate ; but meanwhile it strikes me that there is a long distance between the raw material and the blouses and shirts which you in imagination have already made and clothed us in."

Meanwhile Fritz and Jack, who shared in their mother's enthusiasm, determined to go and collect a quantity of the flax, and set off in great haste with that object, one on the buffalo and the other on the onagra. They disappeared so suddenly that I had not time to stop them ; but ere long we saw them both returning, each of them with a large bundle of the flax-plant, and looking like soldiers who had been on a foraging expedition.

The anxiety which they had exhibited to satisfy their mother's wish prevented me from scolding them for their hasty departure. Jack calmly informed me that his horned-steed had thrown him two or three times ; "but no matter," he added, "the buffalo is a capital animal, and mother may always depend upon me and him to carry out her wishes."

"Very well," I replied ; "but it is now necessary that we should set about the preparation of this flax, and I believe the first step is to ret it."

"What does that mean, papa ?" said Fritz ; "I never heard of such an operation as that."

I then explained to him that the flax was fastened to a ligneous stalk by a sort of vegetable glue, which it was necessary to detach before one could loosen the flax. This operation is called retting, and it is very simple ; it consists in steeping the flax in water for a certain time. Sometimes it is thought necessary to dip only half of it, but in that case each blade must be exposed to the action of the water ; oftentimes it is entirely immersed. We employed this latter method, which the warm temperature of the climate rendered preferable.

For our retting process we chose Flamingo Marsh, and the following morning we joyfully placed our packets of flax upon our cart. When we reached the marsh we divided the bundles, and each of us plunged some into the water, having first tied heavy stones to the flax so as to sink it to the bottom of the water. This employment interested the boys very much, and they engaged in it with all their heart. While we were thus occupied we had many opportunities to remark with what instinct the flamingoes constructed their nests, many of which had been abandoned. They were raised in a cone fashion above the level of the

marsh, and in the summit of this pyramid was a depression in which the female laid her eggs, so that she could sit upon them while she rested her feet in the water. These nests are constructed of clay, and so solidly made that water does not affect them in any way, for it does not penetrate, nor yet does it overturn them. As soon as the little flamingoes are hatched they take to the water naturally.

We left our flax to soak for fifteen days in the marsh, and this notwithstanding my wife's impatience, and at the end of that time we took



it out and spread it in the sun to dry. One day was quite sufficient for this, and the same evening we were enabled to place it all in our cart and bring it to Falcon's Nest.

When we had thus got our flax home in safety I suggested to my wife that it would be better to pound it up at once, and to put off all the other operations to a future period, while at present we set about the more urgent occupations which the rapid approach of the rainy season rendered almost absolutely necessary.

I promised my wife that I would make her carding combs, spindles, and all the necessary apparatus for her purpose, but that all these tasks, which were by no means light ones, could be fitly postponed until the rainy season set in, when we should be glad of some sedentary occupation, and when we should have the time to give them our undivided attention.

We had no time to lose. Already the clouds were banking up in the sky, and the rain fell in heavy showers at intervals. These warnings and prognostications of the wet season impelled us to hasten our movements.

Accordingly, the cart was in constant requisition to carry a new supply of provisions to Falcon's Nest. We scarcely left off our work to take our meals, which as a rule consisted only of bread and cheese. We stored away a great quantity of potatoes and manioc, as we considered that those roots would be the most nourishing for us, and besides, they were the most convenient to store away. But the cocoa-nuts and acorns were by no means neglected, as we desired to give as much variety as possible under the circumstances to our winter food.

We planted a variety of palm-trees at Zeltheim in the near neighbourhood of the potatoes and manioc which we had already sown there, and we also put in all the European corn that was left. The wet season we expected would develop these vegetables very rapidly, and we quite looked forward to an abundant harvest.

But notwithstanding the variety of vegetable produce which our island so bountifully gave us, both savoury and nourishing roots, we had been always in great want of bread; and this want we hoped soon to be able to supply. We also planted a quantity of beautiful sugar-canes, for we intended to have around us within easy reach all the good things that it was at first necessary for us to go far away to obtain, sometimes in dangerous places.

Fifteen days soon passed in these occupations, and scarcely had we finished our work than winter came upon us in earnest with all its horrors.

We listened to the howling of the tempest as it swept the forests around us; thick heavy masses of cloud rolled over head, rain fell in torrents, and before long the land was changed into an immense lake. Little Frank was very much alarmed, and wanted to know whether the deluge had not again come upon the earth. Indeed, without sharing his apprehensions, I was myself greatly surprised at the immense quantity of water that fell, and which was also continually being augmented.

We found it absolutely necessary to quit our aerial habitation after a time, as the wind threatened every day to break the branches and carry them and us into the air, while the rain penetrated our room and gave

us a bath every day in our beds. So we were compelled to descend and to take shelter with our animals in the shed we had made for their accommodation, which we had fortunately pitched, so that it was quite water-tight.

We did not find the shed a very comfortable dwelling-place. The space was not sufficient; we had scarcely room to move, and besides, the smell was by no means agreeable to us. Added to this, the cries of the animals, and the thick smoke which half-blinded and suffocated us whenever we attempted to light a fire, made up a total of disagreeables which were well-nigh insupportable.

We could find no other place than the staircase in which to stow away our cooking utensils, which we were in need of daily; and it was there that my wife, in company with little Frank, installed herself and set to work.

Now for the first time since we had been wrecked did the remembrance of the comfortable houses of our native land come to our recollection, and the courage of my wife and children threatened to give way. I used every effort to re-animate them. I began by improving our temporary habitations as far as my means and circumstances admitted of. We were obliged to put up with it, however bad it was. I managed to construct an extra room, and ventilated the shed better, so as to make the exhalations less disagreeable to our senses. So far as the smoke was concerned we were quite helpless, and we had to relinquish all idea of artificial warmth, while we were very thankful that the temperature of the air almost precluded the necessity for fires. Had a severe frost been added to the excessive dampness, from which we already suffered very much, I do not think that we should have been able to resist their combined attacks.

We also discovered, after a time, that we had not laid in a sufficient stock of fodder for the animals; so we were compelled to share with them, as well as with the fowls, our supply of potatoes and acorns which we had put by for our own consumption. Notwithstanding this assistance, we foresaw that we should be obliged to let them loose to forage for themselves. But before letting them go, we took care to attach bells to their necks, and every evening I went out into the neighbouring country with Fritz to drive the animals home for the night.

Our progress on these occasions was extremely difficult. The tempests one meets with in Europe do not give the faintest idea of the torrents of rain to which we were exposed, and we returned wet to the skin and chilled to the bones.

At length my wife insisted upon our wearing the sailors' thick shirts and the hoods which still remained in our possession. She also made a species of cloak, and we coated it with india-rubber. Thus we had

each a waterproof garment, and could brave the wind and rain with impunity.

It is true we presented a very ridiculous appearance, and the younger children could never resist a burst of laughter whenever we made our appearance in our dresses; they would have been much pleased to have been similarly accoutred, but the want of india-rubber prevented us from supplying them with waterproofs as well.

Ours was principally a preserved meat diet all this while, as we were prevented from lighting a fire, except when it was absolutely necessary to do so in order to cook the manioc cakes, or to roast some meat occasionally, or perhaps to boil some potatoes. For a treat, my wife now and then would give us a dinner of ortolans which we had preserved in butter, but, like a wise housekeeper, she only produced these as a sort



of reserve and relish. This mild treat would cause us to forget all our care and trouble, and for the time being we thought nothing of the privations around us.

The care of the animals usually occupied a great portion of every morning. My sons had also their pets to look after: Fritz took care of his eagle; Ernest trained Master Knips, the ape; Jack was unwearied in educating his jackal; Frank had trained the two puppies, my wife looked after the mother; and I took care of Turk. When all these had been duly and properly attended to, we set about making manioc flour, and filled a number of gourds with it. Night descended very soon now that the clouds were so thick overhead, and the natural obscurity was augmented by the thickness of the branches of the tree beneath which we lived, and which sheltered us. In the evening all the family

would unite around a large wax candle, stuck in a gourd. My wife employed herself in mending our clothes ; I wrote out my journal, which Ernest re-copied. Fritz and Jack were occupied in teaching little Frank to read, or amused themselves in drawing, as well as they could, any animals that had attracted their attention. The day was always brought to a close by my reading a passage in the Bible, and with prayers full of thankfulness and faith in the protection of Providence.

So our gloomy and monotonous days passed away, so very sad compared with our pleasant summer, and we all kept wishing for the speedy return of that happy season.

"As soon as the rain shall have ceased," said my wife, "we must really set about the construction of a proper house, so that next winter may find us more comfortably settled than in a tree. For my own part I confess, that, although I was very pleased with this situation so long as the weather continued fine, I look forward with dread to passing another wet season under similar circumstances. We ought to build a large house wherein both our animals and our stores can be comfortably housed, and where these unpleasant odours and the damp exhalations will not offend. Falcon's Nest can be our summer residence."

We were all of her opinion, only I was by no means certain how we were to build a house sufficiently strong to resist the tremendous force of the wind in the winter season.

"Perhaps," said Fritz, "we may discover some spacious cavern which will serve us as a residence, as one did for Robinson Crusoe."

This suggestion was received with favour, and gave us new hopes. We immediately sought in the sailor's chest for a volume of Robinson Crusoe. The passage which referred to the object we had in view interested us particularly, and we read and re-read it with the greatest attention ; and we resolved that, as soon as the fine weather set in, our very first expedition should be along the coast, where we hoped we should discover a cave sufficiently extensive to serve as a protection and shelter during the rains of the following winter.

But the work which my wife appreciated most of all during these long and dreary days was the beetle and carding combs for the flax. I managed these by filing down some large nails, which I fixed at equal distances from each other in a piece of metal. This tin I raised all round till it took the form of a box, and then poured melted lead into it to keep the nails in their places. My wife was so delighted at my success that she was very anxious to try it, and we looked forward with pleasure to the return of spring.





CHAPTER XXV.

The Return of Spring.—Condition of our Settlement.—Spinning.—Excavating the Rock.—Discovery of a Cavern.—Lighting it up.—The Salt Grotto.—Our Plans.—A Shoal of Herrings.—Salting the Fish.—Sea-dogs.



N cities, winter brings some compensation with it. Our houses are closed against the inclemency of the weather; the family can meet around the cheerful fires; there are parties and dances to attend if one cares for such amusements. Winter in a city is generally only a season of trial for the poor, though I do not imagine that any one is disappointed at the return of spring. But what must our joy have been when, after a period of such dulness and uniform gloom, we perceived the first indications of fine weather! The sun began to make itself felt once more, and the tempests lulled. After many long weeks of enforced seclusion, we at length came joyously forth and gazed rapturously upon the clearing sky, the verdant earth, and inhaled the sweet and balmy air of the first spring day.

I will not attempt to describe the transports of delight to which we all gave way when we exchanged the close and stifling atmosphere of our cabin for the pure air of heaven. We were restored to life and liberty, and the boys fairly revelled in the change, in the odours of countless flowers, and in the songs of hundreds of birds which flew hither and thither on gaudy wings and rejoiced in the return of fine weather. We felt our blood course more quickly through our veins as we drank in these manifold delights. Winter and its trials were all forgotten. A hymn of praise and thanksgiving to God rose simultaneously to our lips, and we looked forward to the hard work of summer, which now appeared to us but child's play in comparison with what we had gone through during the dreary winter weeks.

Our first care was to visit our young plantations. We found out that

we had succeeded wonderfully; the trees were thriving, and the seeds were already putting forth their green shoots above the ground. The old trees were rapidly assuming their summer clothing, and tender and delicate leaves were bursting forth in vivid green tints. The meadows presented a beautiful prospect; the grass and wild flowers and birds vied with each other in varied hues: this was indeed the return of spring, and in an enchanted island.

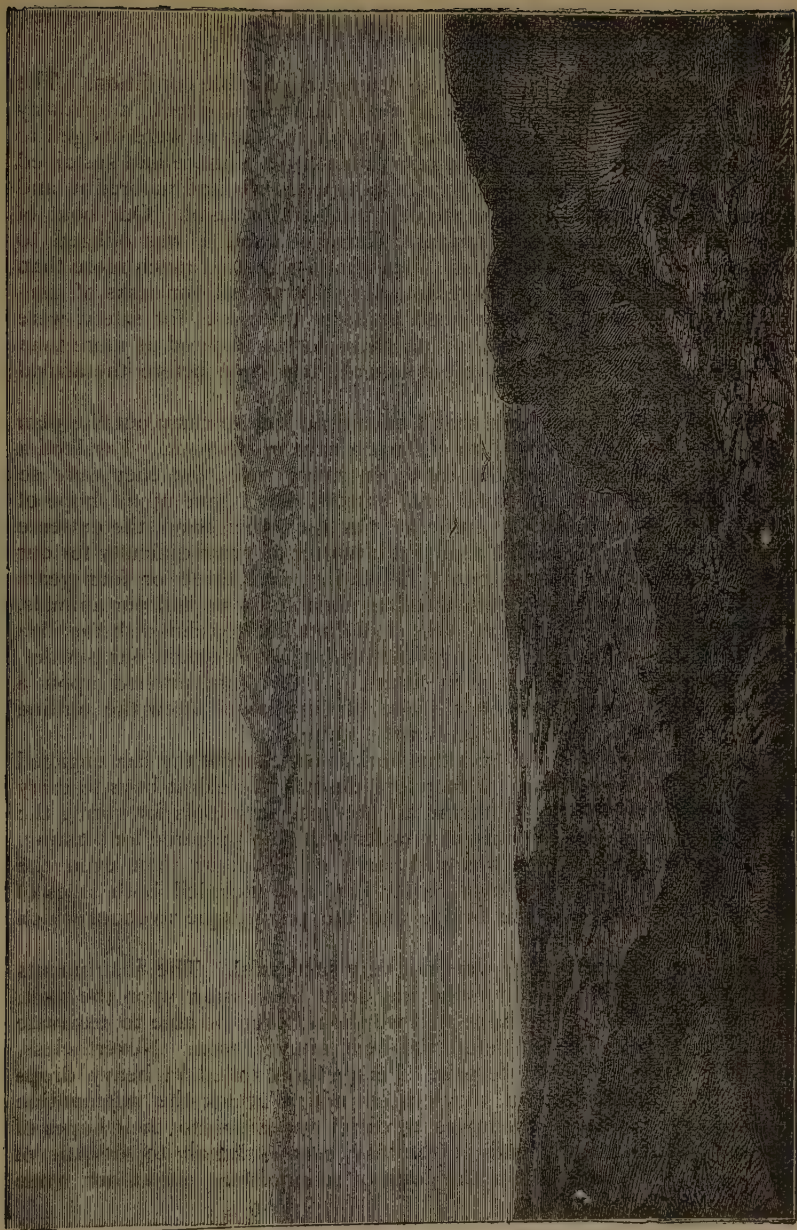
Our house in the tree demanded all our care. It was half-filled with dried leaves, but we soon cleared it out; and we returned to our summer residence joyfully.

But my wife had not forgotten her flax, and was already promising herself the accomplishment of some wonderful work. While the boys were occupied in driving the cattle to fresh pasture land, Fritz and I occupied ourselves in spreading the packets of flax in the sun to dry. When the fibres were sufficiently separated, we set about the beating and combing processes, and we drew out long distaffs of soft and silky flax.

This work, though very laborious, succeeded beyond our utmost expectations. Before we could hope to make linen of it, it was necessary to make a wheel and a reel. I was not well skilled in the art of turning, but, assisted by my wife's advice, I managed to produce the required articles. When my wife saw herself in possession of what she so earnestly desired, her joy was unbounded. She quite gave herself up to her new occupation, and would not permit herself any recreation whatever; she almost grudged the short time she was obliged to be absent at meals.

She pressed little Frank into her service, and while she turned the wheel, he wound the thread. She also expressed a wish that the other boys would also assist, but the occupation was not much to their taste. Nevertheless, the unenergetic Ernest volunteered his help whenever he saw that the other boys and myself were preparing to start on some fatiguing expedition. In fact, our clothing had really got into a most deplorable condition, and it was almost a matter of necessity for all of us to assist in making the linen; but Fritz and Jack with their taste for adventure and naturally warlike dispositions had never devoted themselves to clothes-mending. Far from it. They could think and talk of nothing else but distant expeditions and excursions to hitherto unexplored districts.

But our first essay was to Zeltheim, and they asked my permission to proceed thither, as they were somewhat anxious to ascertain what damage the place had sustained during the winter, and whether any traces of the heavy rains still remained. As I had a similar curiosity on the subject I consented, and we set out along the coast.



VIEW ON THE ISLAND.

We found our dwelling-place in a most deplorable condition. The tent was upset, some of the sail-cloth had disappeared, a quantity of our provisions had been spoiled by the rain, and we were obliged to throw them away. Fortunately, our pretty little pinnace had sustained no injury, it was in as good condition as when we had moored it, and ready to carry us all whenever we felt inclined for a sail. Our boat of tubs, on the contrary, was seriously damaged, and I was obliged to confess that it was quite useless. But what I regretted much more than the loss of the old boat, was the discovery that two of our casks of gun-powder, which we had not placed amongst the rocks for safety, were perfectly spoiled. The sight of all these losses inspired us more than ever with the desire to provide a suitable residence before the arrival of another winter.

Still I had not much hope that I should be able to carry out the plan suggested by the boys, viz., to cut out a cave in the rock. I walked a long way, and examined the rocks on every side; but they were so solid, the holes were so small and narrow, that I gave up all hope of being able to find one to suit us. On the other hand, the extreme hardness of the cliffs would render it a matter of great difficulty for our united strength to hollow out a habitation, and three or four years would be spent in cutting out a dwelling suitable for us and our animals, and provisions for all. Nevertheless, I did not like to relinquish the idea of attempting to cut out a cave sufficiently large to contain our powder, and shelter it from the rain in future. I therefore pitched upon a perpendicular rock, and with a piece of burnt wood drew the outline of the projected cave on the face of the stone.

We determined to commence this work at once, while the flax engaged my wife's whole attention. I therefore desired the eldest boys to carry from Falcon's Nest to Zeltheim all the necessary tools for boring the rock, and a sufficient quantity of powder was also prepared for blasting. The spot we had chosen was still more commodious than even the tent: the view extended over Safety Bay, and included both sides of the Jackal River, with the bridge and the picturesque avenues which bordered them.

The first day our efforts were not very successful. The instruments in our possession did not make any great impression upon the rock, and we scarcely dared to hope that we should ever be able to excavate the cave, at any rate, not before the next rainy season. Nevertheless, my little navvies did not despair. Perspiration rolled in heavy drops from their foreheads; but they ceased not to attack the adamantine surface with a courage which was in direct opposition to their hopes of success. Towards the end of the day, even I began to despair of success, and we were all on the point of relinquishing our labour, when

it suddenly appeared to me as if the now exposed surface of the rock was of a more pliable nature than what we had hitherto been boring, and we actually detached some large flakes. So we bravely persevered, and after a few days' steady work, we had actually penetrated to a depth of seven feet. One morning, Jack, who was in the cavity at work detaching a large piece of rock, suddenly exclaimed,—

"I have got through it! I have pierced it!"

"Whatever do you mean?" I cried. "Pierced what? Do you mean to say that you have got through the mountain!"



"Yes," replied Jack; "really pierced it right through."

"What rubbish," exclaimed Fritz, who had come up hastily at his brother's triumphant cry. "What poor little mountain is this that you have bored through with your wretched little crow-bar. My dear Jack, you might as well have gone on to Europe while you were about it. It lies beneath our feet, I believe."

But this "chaff" did not prevent Jack from sticking stoutly to his first assertion, and his brother, unable to restrain his curiosity, but still quizzing Jack, got into the hole to see this wonderful thing for himself. In a few seconds he in his turn exclaimed,—

"It is quite true, father; Jack is perfectly right. It is most astonishing. The crow-bar can be pushed in for its entire length without meeting any resistance, and I can push it in any direction just as easily."

This announcement surprised me very much, and I was quickly at the spot. I found it as they said, and I soon enlarged the aperture with a few vigorous strokes of the crow-bar. The hole was then wide enough to admit one of the boys with ease. Both wanted to be first, but I stopped them. The cavity might be a precipice, or perhaps, might contain some dangerous animal in its recesses. So I first advanced to the opening to ascertain, if possible, the extent of the cave. But scarcely had I put my head into the hole than I felt a sudden giddiness.

"Take care boys, take care," I cried. "Do not enter this cavern on any account; it would be certain death to do so."

"How can that be, papa?" asked Jack. "Are there lions or snakes or dragons inside? No matter what monsters there are, they won't find me afraid of them."

I then took occasion to explain to the boys that no animals could possibly live in such a place, in such an atmosphere.

"The atmospheric air we breathe," I continued, "contains certain proportions of gases, and exists in certain conditions,—a continual renewal is one of the most essential. If it be confined within a space for any great length of time, it becomes unfit for man, or indeed, for any animal to breathe; and will almost immediately suffocate any being exposed to its deleterious influence."

"But," said Fritz, "a man can always run away when he feels this unwholesome vapour around him."

"You think so," I replied; "but sometimes the action of the gas is so insidious, and it is so stealthy in its operations, that it is not perceived till too late, and you are lost, for no one can venture to your assistance."

"But how can they ever recover people who have been exposed to the influence of this gas?" asked Fritz.

"By bringing them into a pure atmosphere and throwing cold water upon their faces, and rubbing them with warm blankets or cloths; but thank goodness we have no one for whom this sad care is required. Our first business is to purify the air in the cavern, and the surest way to accomplish that, is by means of fire, which not only will not burn except in atmospheric air, but it will also purify foul air."

The lads hardly waited for my explanation, but collecting a heap of dry grass they piled it up at the mouth of the cavern, and set fire to it. I threw a handful of the blazing material into the cave, and it was

immediately extinguished, and the blazing heap at the entrance very quickly went out, as the foul air continued to escape; so I saw that more decided measures must be adopted if we wished to enter the cavern that day.

We had carried away from the wreck amongst other things a quantity of grenades, rockets, and fireworks, which had been put on board for



SEA-BIRDS.

signalling purposes. From the chest containing these, I took a number of the grenades and cast them into the interior of the cavern. They exploded with a very loud report, which was re-echoed in an extraordinary way within. The foul air rushed out with the smoke. We continued to discharge our fireworks until we had exhausted the supply we had brought down, and we then once more lit the fire and tested the air in the cave with another blazing handful of grass.

This time it burned quite brightly within as well as in the open air. But as we gazed another phenomenon attracted our attention.

While the rockets and fireworks were exploding inside the cavern, we had remarked that the sparks had assumed a variety of colours, and had presented a most beautiful appearance. The cave had all the characteristics of a fairy palace lighted up by winged spirits, and the walls glittered as if they were covered with diamonds. Then darkness supervened.

We were extremely anxious to examine the interior of our latest acquisition, as it appeared to me that this fairy appearance was due to the materials of which the walls of the cavern were composed. I thought, however, that it would not be altogether prudent for us to enter immediately, although we had purified the interior; so I told Jack to return to Falcon's Nest and bring back a supply of candles, by means of which we might explore the cave, while at the same time he could announce our discovery to his mother and request her to come and inspect our new possession. My idea respecting the candles was to tie a number of them round a stick and thus form a torch, and by the light we could effectually explore the cavern.

Jack mounted upon his buffalo like a herald going to announce a successful battle, and departed with a speed which showed how great was his desire to communicate the news to the rest of the family. I was in hope that his glowing description of the cave would induce his mother and brothers to accompany him on his return. In fact, scarcely four hours had elapsed when we perceived Jack returning on his buffalo, but in advance of him came the cart drawn by the cow, driven by the prudent Ernest, and seated in the vehicle was my wife, and little Frank, who was disputing Ernest's right to assume the guidance of the "carriage." Ernest and Jack waved their hats when they came in sight of us, and cheered loudly.

The gay cavalier, mounted upon the buffalo, gallantly rode up to the cart as soon as it stopped and politely handed his mother out. All this was executed in the midst of a series of comical gambols, and jokes of all kinds.

But during Jack's absence Fritz and I had not been idle. We had considerably enlarged the opening, and had carried away a quantity of the loose stones and earth that obstructed the approach.

I was desirous that we should all enter the cavern together, so instead of tying all the candles as a torch, as I had at first thought of doing, I gave each member of the party one to carry, and we also carried flint and steel with tinder, and a spare candle each.

Having taken all these precautions, we entered the cavern. I led the way, my sons followed, and my wife accompanied by Frank brought

up the rear, for the little lad was somewhat nervous at first. Our two dogs were also of the party, and by the cautious manner in which they



advanced they showed that they were not entirely free from the feeling of terror which obscurity imparts more or less to all animals.

We had scarcely advanced many paces, when a spectacle was presented to our gaze, which called forth all our admiration.

The floor was of a sort of white and transparent granite, from which, at intervals, uprose pillars of the same material which appeared as if they supported the roof, from which at unequal distances hung crystal pendants, and as these pendants had numerous facets, the glitter was infinitely multiplied, so that the whole cavern seemed to be hung with diamonds. The floor of this fairy temple was on the same level as the exterior earth and was covered with a dry, fine sand.

At first our admiration knew no bounds, and we almost believed that the whole thing was the effect of enchantment. As for little Frank, he had not the least doubt that we had broken into a real fairy palace, and that the fairy having heard the wishes we had expressed under the shelter of our tree at Falcon's Nest, had very kindly made over to us this splendid dwelling-place.

Meantime, I set about to examine the crystals of the grotto. I had at first thought that they were similar to the stalactites which form in the mountain caves of Switzerland ; but the walls were too dry for the formation of stalactites, which are the result of a continual dropping of water, the solid particles contained in the water forming a hard mass. I then recollected that I had heard some time or other of the formation of solid banks of salt in the interior of the earth, and I formed a very different opinion concerning the crystals.

Accordingly, I broke one and examined it carefully. I then tasted it, and to my inexpressible satisfaction I perceived that my latest conjecture was the true one, and that we had actually penetrated a salt mine, and that salt gems were the jewels which adorned our new palace. So for the future we should not be obliged to prosecute a tedious search along the shore for the salt which had been deposited by the evaporation of the sea-water. This discovery, which gave us an unbounded supply of a mineral so essential to the health of ourselves and our animals, caused me even greater satisfaction than did the discovery of the cavern itself ; for besides the trouble we had to collect the salt, we were obliged to cleanse it afterwards ; but here we could gather it in handfuls without any preparation being necessary before we used it.

While I was speaking, I noticed some large blocks of salt which had become detached from the arched roof and lay scattered in fragments upon the sandy floor. A similar accident might occur at any moment, and the smallest of the crystals which hung suspended from the roof would be quite sufficient to kill us if it fell upon our heads. So to make sure I withdrew my party, and then fired several times with ball through the cavern. As no fragments were detached by these shots we were pretty well satisfied with the solidity of the roof, for the present at any rate.

When we penetrated still farther into the cave our surprise at the quaint forms produced by the play of the light upon the walls was extreme. In one place the salt blocks rose up in majestic columns almost to the vaulted roof, which was itself covered with fantastic figures which took the forms of men or fabulous animals, according to the angle



at which the light of our torches fell upon the surrounding shapes. Farther on still were oriental divans, lustres, gothic lamps or weird shadow-figures most wonderfully cut out in relief. Little Frank thought we had reached a cathedral; Jack said, it was a fairy palace; Ernest examined the structure and remained thoughtful and silent; my wife was charmed.

"No more winter for the children," she murmured. Fritz fairly

jumped with delight. "It is a castle of diamonds," he exclaimed enthusiastically,—“it is the most beautiful place in the world.” “And Providence is the architect, my boy,” added his mother.

Fritz embraced her. “God is omniscient,” he said, with tearful eyes. “In His mercy He makes everything good, but the best thing of all is that He has bestowed upon us poor children a perfect mother like you.”

“Ah ! true happiness is only to be found where perfect love exists,” whispered my wife, as she kissed her sons affectionately.

Farther in we found that masses of salt had become detached, probably in consequence of the firing, and not from the damp ; so I again resorted to my former expedient, and subsequently thrust with long branches at those crystals which appeared most likely to fall. We also carefully sounded the vault, and after a while quitted it, perfectly convinced respecting its solidity.

When we had once decided that we would take this grotto for our winter residence, goodness knows what a number of projects were mooted respecting the arrangement of our new habitation.

As we returned to Falcon’s Nest the wonderful discovery of the cavern naturally formed the topic of conversation. The rainy season now had no terrors for us ; we were sure of shelter, not only for ourselves, but for our live-stock, and for our stores of provisions. Again and again our plans were discussed, and after some twenty suggestions had been made and rejected, the following arrangement was finally agreed to :—

It was decided that Falcon’s Nest should continue to be our summer residence as heretofore. But we agreed to remove the windows from our aerial habitation, for after all they were not necessary during the fine weather, and that all the shutters and fastenings should also be taken away.

I then planned a door in the rock at our new residence, and I made at each side, above the door, two good-sized openings in which we would fix the windows we intended to bring from Falcon’s Nest. Having thus provided our house with air and light, without in any way detracting from its safety and durability, we decided to divide the interior into two equal compartments ; those on the right we reserved for ourselves ; on the other side we would arrange the domestic and culinary apartments, the stables, etc., etc. At the end we would fit up our cellars and our store-rooms.

We had only three windows at our disposal, and those we divided in the following way :—

One was set apart for the room we intended the boys to occupy, one was allotted to the chamber my wife and I slept in, and the third was appropriated to the kitchen. In this last apartment I managed sub-

sequently to fit up a sort of chimney with four planks leading up like a shaft to an opening in the rock.

The space at our disposal was so great that we were able to allow ourselves plenty of room in all these arrangements; and I made our work-room of very large dimensions, because we should be obliged to use it as a sort of coach-house and put up our cart therein, and besides, we should find it necessary to do a quantity of work under cover.

The stables were divided into four compartments, according to the different animals which we intended should occupy them. The magazine was, like the cellar, placed in the most remote and in the darkest portion of the cavern.

All our working utensils and our various provisions were equally allotted their proper places, and when all had been accounted for we found that, notwithstanding the immense size of the cavern, we were obliged to curtail some of the space already fixed upon for our fowls. Never since we had landed on the island had we displayed such activity, and it is only fair to add that our efforts were crowned with complete success.

We were thus occupied during the day, but we returned every evening to Falcon's Nest; and we owe to this sojourn many useful discoveries, and the accomplishment of our grand project.

Our vicinity to the sea first gave us the idea of setting up a "preserve" of turtles, which we set about to stock in the following manner: Whenever we noticed a turtle on the beach, one of my sons immediately sallied forth, and getting between the animal and the sea, effectually cut off his retreat. The other lads approached him in front, and a cord which they skilfully passed beneath the turtle, quickly made him a prisoner. We then fastened the other end of the line to a stake, and the animal thus tethered was enabled to roam about towards the sea or in any other direction he pleased, but only as far as the rope permitted.

I need not detail the quantity or quality of the fish or crustacea which we caught on this portion of the coast; it is sufficient to state that they were very abundant. But one day, while we were engaged fishing, a very curious sight attracted our attention in Safety Bay. About a mile from where we were stationed, the sea appeared to be in a great commotion, and every now and then the water rose up high in the air.

Just above the surface an immense flock of sea-birds were wheeling and darting hither and thither in great commotion, and filling the air with their shrill cries. We were completely puzzled at this spectacle. Sometimes a great floating mass appeared on the waves, sometimes it disappeared beneath them; from time to time a tiny flame glittered, which was quenched almost immediately we observed it, but reappeared once more the following moment.

The enormous mass, whatever it was, was rapidly making for the shore ; still as such a distance separated us from it, we had plenty of time to speculate upon its nature. My wife thought it was a sand-bank which we had previously noticed somewhat nearer the point as we thought, and the movement of the water she considered had prevented us seeing the full extent of the shoal ; while the movement which we attributed to the sand could be nothing but an optical illusion.

Fritz was of opinion that it was a subaqueous volcano in action, and pointed to the flame which we all noticed on the surface as confirmatory evidence of his view of the phenomenon. Ernest replied that if it were a volcano, the birds would not congregate above it in that manner, as it was contrary to their natural instinct ; for they would rather avoid a volcano. He thought it was some marine monster. This idea pleased the boys, who were ready for the marvellous at any time.

"Well," I exclaimed in my turn, "I am of opinion that your volcano will prove to be nothing more nor less than a shoal of herrings, which have come from the icy seas, and are bound for Safety Bay. Providence has sent us a new blessing."

"But what is a shoal of herrings, papa ; is it a sand-bank upon which the herrings rest themselves ? If so, that would be something wonderful indeed !"

"A shoal of herrings," I replied, "is an enormous quantity of small fish which swim together in thousands, so that they frequently extend for miles. Their motion in the water has the appearance of a sand-bank glistening in the sun."

While we were conversing thus, the shoal had been gradually approaching, and they had now entered the bay. With such precipitation did they hasten forward that they rushed completely on shore, some leaping over the others ; and we now understood the scintillation we had previously noticed. This event quite confirmed my conjectures, and the boys were in raptures at the sight of this enormous quantity of fish.

But it was not sufficient to admire them. We at once set about to determine the best way to secure the delicacy which Providence had provided, and to use our best efforts, and that without loss of time, to secure the fish. I at once organized a system of fishing for the herrings, the number of which within our reach promised us an abundant supply of wholesome food during the winter season.

I mentioned some time ago that our original tub-boat had been rendered quite unfit for active service by the storms, and I made up my mind to detach the tubs from the planks, and place the herrings in those receptacles.

No sooner said than done. And while some of us set to work to loose the tubs, I despatched another party to the grotto to procure a

quantity of salt. When this had all been finished, Fritz waded into the water and cast the fish up high and dry upon the beach. Jack and Ernest cleverly cleaned them as quickly as they could, my wife salted them immediately, and I endeavoured to utilize my recollections of herring salting, packed them into the tubs, putting a layer of salt and a layer of herrings alternately.

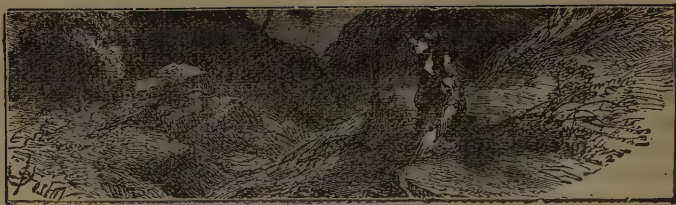
As soon as one cask was full I carefully fastened it down, and placing it on the sledge, the ass and the buffalo quickly transported it to our new storehouse in the cavern. We could have desired some little more method in our proceedings: some worked too fast, while others did not work fast enough; however, by degrees order was established, and the work then made most satisfactory progress.

We devoted four days to this employment, during which period we became possessed of many tons weight of herrings well salted, and of a quantity of fresh fish besides.

Before many days had passed away, Safety Bay was visited by some other strangers. This time it was a pack of sea-dogs, which had, as I suppose, been following the shoal of herrings. We succeeded in capturing a dozen of these new arrivals, for the sake of the oil and skins: the former would serve for light, while the latter would make excellent leather. The flesh we abandoned to the tender mercies of the colony of crabs inhabiting the Jackal River, and they quickly arrived in great numbers to the banquet we had provided. The boys succeeded in capturing a quantity, and acting on my suggestion, they constructed a sort of tank out of an old sea-chest. This they pierced with numerous holes, fixed to the side of the stream, and kept it in its position with some heavy stones. We constructed a similar reservoir for the smaller fish we caught in the sea, and which we were very glad to be able to keep alive. I also made a very useful addition to our sledge by adapting to it the four small wheels of the gun carriage which we had brought from the wreck. By these means we became possessed of a second light and commodious carriage, perfectly adapted to carry heavy weights.

In this manner our days were occupied. A week had now elapsed since we had, so to speak, quitted Falcon's Nest; but we returned thither to celebrate our Sunday, and to offer our thanks to Providence for the new benefits He had so mercifully bestowed upon us.





CHAPTER XXVI.

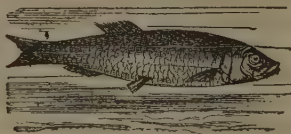
The Plaster.—The Sturgeon.—Isinglass and Window-glass.—Harvest.—The Cotton Fields.—A beautiful Landscape.



HE arrangement of our grotto proceeded but slowly, such engagements as I have described frequently interrupting us, and our activity was not equal to our desire to see our subterranean palace fitted up and completed for our occupation.

Nevertheless we trusted that everything would be in order by the time the rainy season set in again, at which period we should be obliged to take possession.

Meanwhile I had already examined the rock very attentively, and I had remarked that the salt crystals had a base of gypsum. This discovery I regarded as very important, and one which would probably be of great use to us in future ; but, as I did not wish to enlarge the cavern, I set about to detach some portions of the exterior rock, when I found



HERRING.

a quantity of broken fragments strewn on the ground just behind the place I had set aside for the powder magazine. Some of these I carried into our kitchen, and calcined a quantity of them in the fire. When they became cool again, we very easily reduced them to a fine white powder, which gave us plaster or cement of an excellent quality. We made a heap of it so quickly that the boys declared that I used to get out of

bed when they were all asleep, in order to burn more gypsum. In this they were of course mistaken, as I had quite as much work to do during the day as they had, without getting up in the middle of the night to resume it.

The first use I made of this cement was to complete the preparation of our casks of salted herrings, which I covered over on both sides with a layer of plaster about two inches thick, and completely excluded the air. This I only applied to a few barrels, the contents of the remainder I reserved to be smoked. For this purpose we built a hut after the fashion of the American trappers. In this hut I suspended the herrings on strings; underneath I lit a great fire of damp wood, moss, leaves, and all such things, which, when lighted, would give forth a tremendous smoke. We then closed up the hut completely, and by these means we obtained dried herrings of a good yellow colour, and quite as appetizing as those supplied by the most skilful Dutch fishers. We then packed them up and stored them away in our magazine.

About a month after we had been visited by the herrings, some other fish paid us a visit. They were much larger, and boldly entered Safety Bay. These new comers proved to be salmon and sturgeon, as well as some other fish about the same size, which sought fresh water wherein



STURGEON.

to deposit their spawn, according to their nature, upon the stones with which the river bed was covered, after which they would return to the sea once more.

Jack was the first to perceive our new visitors as they made their way towards Jackal River.

"Father, father," he exclaimed, "here comes a whole 'school' of young whales; but they are too late, for all the herrings have been captured and salted down. It will be something like a capture to take these fellows, and smoke them. Why, one of them would fill one of our tubs."

We hastened down to the bank of the stream, and saw that there was indeed a quantity of these beautiful fish I have named swimming up against the current. Each fish was about five feet long. I was entirely of Jack's opinion, and thought that we could not do better than add some of them to our stores.

"Now," said I, "would you like to jump into the water, and throw me these fine fellows out one by one, so that we may salt and smoke them?"

Jack gazed at me in the greatest astonishment, as if he was in doubt whether or not I was speaking seriously. Then all of a sudden he made up his mind, apparently.

"Yes, father, certainly, with all my heart," he exclaimed, and ran off to the grotto.

He soon returned with his bow and arrows, a ball of string, and a couple of the dog-fish bladders. Curious to see how he proposed to take the fish, I looked on in silence, while his brothers and my wife also approached and regarded his proceedings attentively. He fastened a strong barb to his arrow, to the other end of which he took the precaution to tie the strings to which the bladders were also attached. I still looked on in silence. Then fitting an arrow to his bow, he drew it to its full strength, took aim at a great salmon, and let fly. The weapon pierced the fish's side.

"He is wounded," exclaimed Jack, joyfully, "he is wounded. He has dived with the arrow under water; but the bladder tells us whereabouts he is. Fritz, Ernest, come and see!"

His brothers congratulated him, without any jealousy, upon the success of his manœuvre, but not wishing to remain idle spectators of the scene, they ran to fetch the harpoons and to signalise themselves in their turn by spearing some monster fish also. We were much in want of their assistance by the time they returned; for had they not arrived when they did, we should have been obliged to abandon the salmon we had struck, for the fish threw himself about so furiously, that we began to fear he would break our line.

At length we pulled him close to the bank, and our success gave us new ardour. Fritz prepared his harpoon; I armed myself with a trident, Neptune fashion; Jack continued his arrow practice, while Ernest took possession of a fork somewhat similar to mine. With these weapons we worked marvels. Every blow told; but the real difficulty was in getting the fish ashore, for they made such violent struggles to disengage themselves, and their strength, added to their desperation, made it no easy task to conquer them, so a regular combat ensued.

We then regretted the loss of our old boat of tubs, which would have proved of great assistance to us under these circumstances. Fritz had just harpooned an immense sturgeon, about eight feet long, and all his efforts to secure his prize were utterly ineffectual. I came to his assistance at length, and between us we succeeded in landing the immense fish; but not until we had tied him by a second line, to which we attached the buffalo to drag it ashore.

After this struggle we set about preparing our captives. The fish were split open and cleaned, and as we were thus engaged, I recollected a delicacy much in favour with the Russians and Dutch, which they call *caviare*. I accordingly set about preparing some.

With this object in view I put aside all the sturgeons' eggs that we could find. Having first carefully washed them, I placed them in a calabash pierced with a number of small holes, and when they appeared to me to be sufficiently drained of the water, we pressed them out into a solid mass, somewhat resembling cheese, and placed this mass in the hut to undergo the smoking process.

My wife meanwhile boiled a portion of the sturgeon in oil, and prepared it as tunny is prepared in the Mediterranean. The remainder we salted. I also endeavoured to utilize the bladders of these enormous fish by manufacturing a kind of isinglass out of them, which was very useful to us. I had heard that to obtain this substance it was sufficient to cut the bladders into thin layers, when one obtains a kind of shell-like substance, which is dried in the sun. By this means we got a very transparent material, which I fancied would serve us for window glass.

All this time the want of our old tub-boat, inelegant though it was, was keenly felt. The pinnacle was not suited for coasting close in shore, and the want of a light boat for such a purpose was acknowledged.

So the idea came into my mind that we ought to make a canoe of bark, such as savage tribes use, but for that purpose we must take care that the sap was up, so we had no time to lose. All around us were trees whose trunks were quite sufficiently large for our purpose; but I did not like to cut them down so near our habitation, where they were most useful both for their fruits and for the protection they afforded us. It was at length decided that the bark canoe should be constructed in another locality, and the very next excursion should be undertaken with that object. Besides this, we had to renew some of our stocks of provisions, and we wished to collect candle-berries, some gum-elastic, and calabashes.

All this time the plantations at Zeltheim had been growing most splendidly—the vegetation there was simply astonishing. Every month we could count upon some new growth, and a little watering from time to time was all that was necessary. The peas and all kinds of vegetables had come up in a most extraordinary manner. We had succeeded in obtaining an enormous quantity of corn, the ears of which were nearly a foot long. We had cucumbers and melons beyond our utmost expectations. The sugar-canes and bananas did not succeed less satisfactorily. Thus we perceived all these things growing around us, not only necessities, but even the luxuries of existence being in abundance; and the

wonderful success of our vegetable garden gave us the greatest hopes of our more distant plantations.

Next morning we all set out together for Falcon's Nest. There we found that everything equalled our expectations. We found the corn which my wife had sown springing up in full vigour. We cut all the grain which had already ripened, and piled it up in sheaves to protect it from the numerous birds with which the fields were covered, and which appeared particularly devoted to the crops of ripe maize. Of all our grain this had succeeded best. Nevertheless, the supply was not equal



A GREENLAND CANOE.

to the demand we could have made upon it; but there was at least sufficient to supply us with an abundance of seed for future crops.

After this examination of our riches in the vegetable way, we took a look at the various animals. They were all in excellent condition, and gave us many proofs of their good health and spirits. We were entertained with the spectacle of a little encounter between the eagle and a fine hen bustard, which it pursued into the air, and brought down for us.

Jack remained by himself near the field of maize, and made his

jackal bring him a dozen of fine fat quails. The hen bustard had been much hurt by the eagle, but we hoped to be able to recover it in time.

We once again took possession of our tree at Falcon's Nest for a short time, as all our business could not be transacted in a day. My wife, who had played such a good part in all our discoveries, now distinguished herself by a most useful invention. This was a liquor composed of the juices of maize and sugar-canes, and which we all with one accord named ambrosia. This is how our housekeeper made it: she crushed between two stones the least ripe grains of the corn which we



COTTON PLANT.

had gathered; she then put this species of cake into a linen bag, and having pressed it, she added to it the juice of the sugar-cane. From this mixture resulted a sweet, agreeable beverage, white as milk, and like it, very sustaining.

At length we fixed the day for the great excursion we contemplated. I informed my children that I had a very important point in view, which was to establish a colony of animals at some distance from our habitation and then leave them to themselves. By these means I hoped they would become acclimatized and increase naturally, while we should be

infinitely the gainers, inasmuch as we should always be able to find them when we wanted them, and meantime we should be at no trouble to procure food for them.

All the arrangements for the successful accomplishment of this great design were quickly made. My wife selected from the hen-yard some hens and a pair of cocks; I took four young pigs from the styes, two pairs of sheep, two goats, and a male of each species from the stables. Next morning we put all these animals in the cart, and placed therein a store of food for ourselves sufficient to last for some time, as well as a supply of arms and ammunition, and such domestic utensils as



we should need. The ass, the buffalo, and the cow were harnessed to the vehicle. Fritz mounted the onagra, and constituted himself our scout to explore those tracks which there might otherwise be some danger in traversing. Thus equipped we set forth upon a totally new expedition.

We took a route entirely different to any we had previously traversed, and we were often obliged to clear the way for our cavalcade with the hatchets. We proceeded almost entirely amidst tall grass and brushwood, and also traversed a wood intertwined with strong lianas, and at length reached a plain quite covered with bushes which were thickly

sprinkled with white flakes. Frank, who first noticed them from the top of the cart, exclaimed joyfully,—

“Oh, look at the snow! what fun it is! Mother, help me down, please, and let me run and make snow-balls, as we used to do. So you see there is real winter here too, and not that horrible rain which fell like a deluge last year.”

I leave you to imagine the hearty laughter with which we greeted these *naïve* expressions of surprise, as snow in these latitudes could only be possible on the top of a high mountain. Nevertheless, the appearance of the white substance was much in favour of Frank's view of the case, for the blossoms resembled snow very closely.

Fritz, mounted on his onagra, hastened forward to ascertain what this white substance really was. A handful which he immediately brought back to me confirmed me in the opinion I had already formed at first sight of the plain. We had found the cotton-tree.

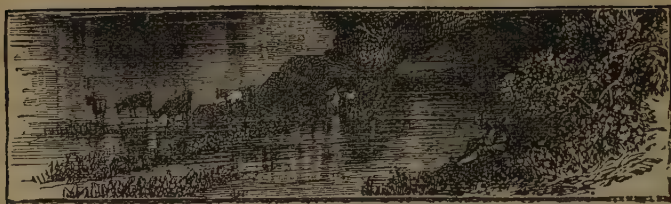
My wife's joy at this discovery was very great when I told her the news; and like a good manager she now looked forward to all the advantages we should derive from the supply, and which would provide us with abundant occupation during the approaching winter.

Frank certainly regretted the snow a little; but his mother consoled him with a promise of some beautiful new shirts, made with cotton.

But putting its usefulness aside, it was a very pretty and a very interesting sight to see this field completely covered as it was with the white pods of cotton. The pods having arrived at maturity had burst open, and the wind had caught it up and kept twirling it about in the air just like snow.

I was well aware that cotton was indigenous to the latitude, and was much surprised that we had not met with it sooner. We filled our sacks with it now, however, and my wife filled her pockets with the seeds for the purpose of sowing them at Zeltheim. After some little time I gave the signal for our departure. We proceeded across the field of cotton for about another quarter of an hour, and then we began to find the march somewhat long, and were by no means certain that we should succeed in finding a place quite suited for the purpose we intended, when at length from the summit of a hill, whence we could view all the adjacent country, we discovered a suitable terrestrial paradise. There I determined to place our animals.

At the foot of a gentle slope ran a clear stream—a treasure unspeakable for the poor beasts, and for ourselves also when we came to visit them. The wood we had lately traversed would serve as a protection against the north winds. The thick grass with which the plain was covered would supply abundance of food for the immigrants. So we decided to set about the establishment of the new colony without delay.



CHAPTER XXVII.

A proposed Farm.—House Building.—The Strawberry Anana.—Black Swans.—The Duck-billed Platypus.



THE spot on which I had fixed for the farm was most fortunately placed ; the trees which grew round were more than a foot in thickness and inclosed an oblong space of which the longest side faced the sea. The highest trees were about eighty feet, the smallest fifteen or sixteen feet high. I cut deep mortises in these trees about ten feet above the ground, and made others at a similar distance, into which I introduced strong beams transversely ; this framework if not elegant was at least solid. The second storey was a little higher than the first. I then covered the whole edifice with a rustic roof of the bark of trees. To obtain a sufficient quantity of this material we were obliged to strip it from the neighbouring trees, and dry it in the sun by means of placing great stones upon it to prevent its curling up in the process. We then fastened the sheets together with the spines of the acacias—for our iron nails were too precious and too few in number for this purpose, and we treasured them like gold for an emergency. But the spines of the acacia, pointed a little and dried in the sun, did wonderfully well.

The effect of our roof of bark was somewhat strange, and in appearance recalled the old coats of mail made of scale-plates placed one over the other. We trained long reeds over the walls of our new edifice, and these interlaced, though very flexible, provided some resistance. This trellis was only raised to a height of about six feet from the ground, the remainder of the space was filled up by a sort of open lattice-work which gave free access to the air.

While these works were in progress we made many discoveries. The first and most important were the terebinth and the gum-mastic tree,

which delighted me, for I counted on them for a supply of tar to pitch the sides of the canoe which I intended to make.

We were still rejoicing over this discovery, when the boys remarked that the goats, which had been rooting about amidst the fragments of bark, had discovered a species of it which they ate with great avidity. Fritz, who was most on the alert, and the most curious of all the boys, followed the example of the goats and tasted it also. As soon as he had done so he recognised it as the bark of the cinnamon-tree. So



A POLYNESIAN RESIDENCE.

Fate, not content with offering us the things most necessary for our welfare, had given us something very agreeable to flavour our food withal.

During our dinner the boys as usual plied me with questions respecting the precious products which we had just discovered, and I was obliged to rub up all my little knowledge of botany to answer them.

"The first two specimens," I said, "the terebinth and the gummastic, are found in great quantities in Greece; they are used in a

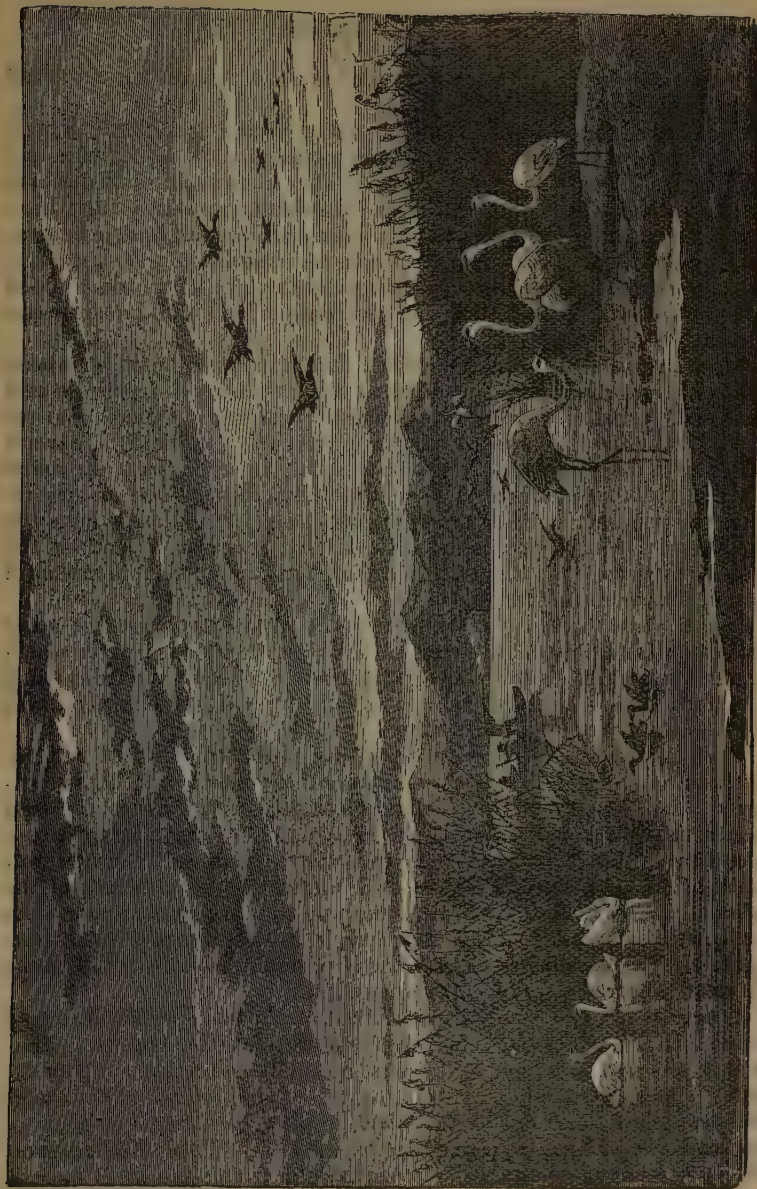
thousand different ways," and I then explained how I intended to make use of them in the construction of my bark canoe. As for the cinnamon, I added that the best quality of that product was derived from Ceylon, where it is gathered chiefly from the young trees while the bark is still tender, and after much preparation is finally dried in the sun. The natives of Ceylon do an immense trade in cinnamon.

After dinner we resumed our house-building, and I need scarcely say that such an undertaking as this occupied us fully for many days. I had been under the impression at first that three or four days would be sufficient for the work, but a week passed before our task was completed. The arrangement of the interior was very simple; it consisted of a series of compartments each proportioned in size to the number of occupants for whose accommodation it was designed. We also constructed a covered building for our own occupation at such times as we came to see our new colony; the door was placed on the side facing the sea. We had thought of plastering the walls of this hut with clay and cement, but this decoration was put aside till a more favourable opportunity; for the time being we thought it sufficient that the animals should have the necessary shelter, as after all this was only an experiment, and the success of the farm was of course dependent upon the willingness of the animals which we had carried thither to remain, and we must first accustom them to return to their house every evening from the meadows. To this end we took care to leave in each stall a good supply of that food which each most preferred, and mixed also with a quantity of salt. We made up our minds to see to this frequently.

The provisions which we had brought with us had now become almost exhausted. But nevertheless I did not wish to return to Falcon's Nest without having completed this new establishment; so I contented myself by despatching Fritz and Jack to go in search of sufficient food to enable us to prolong our stay for some time longer, and also for a further supply of fodder for the animals. The two brave lads were delighted at the duty laid upon them, and set out, each mounted on his favourite beast, taking with them also the lazy old donkey, which Fritz led off with a halter, while Jack stroked its ears with his whip.

During the boys' absence Ernest and myself organized a little excursion with the object of exploring the neighbourhood, and to see whether there were any palm-trees or other nourishing fruit-trees in these localities. The valley in which we had now established our farm was otherwise most beautiful and charming, but it did not contain any of those fruits which make the riches of the New World, nor yet did it inclose any species of game.

At first we proceeded along by the side of the stream which we had noticed when we arrived first in the valley. Before long we reached a



THE LAKE IN THE VALLEY.

large marsh or swamp, in which extended a lake, where we perceived birds of numerous species.

I was here delighted to recognise a tall tufty kind of grass which grew on the border of this swamp. This was a kind of rice, which, although small in size, was excellent in quality. The lake itself reminded me forcibly of the lakes in my own dear fatherland; and one must have seen the tranquil Swiss waters to fully appreciate our feelings as we contemplated the scene before us. It is true the illusion did not last long, for the luxuriant vegetation on the margin of the lake very soon recalled to us the fact that between us and our native land the broad ocean extended its mighty waters.

As we approached the lake the birds flew around in great numbers, and we then recognised amongst them a bustard, many canary fowls, and a number of small birds whose appearance was quite unknown to us. Ernest, with a skill and quickness that surprised me, fired at several and brought them down. Meantime, the ape, guided, even in the midst of his gambols, by an unerring instinct for eating, which had already resulted in the capture of a canary, made a new and a very delicious discovery. He pounced upon some strawberry ananas, and at the moment we came upon him he was eating, with every demonstration of delight, this exquisite fruit.

Ernest, who had not hesitated to taste the cinnamon when the goats were eating it, hesitated still less to eat the strawberries upon which the ape was regaling,—and I rather think that the boy was quite as much pleased as the monkey; for Ernest, though quite a deep thinker, was nevertheless something of a *gourmand*.

When he had eaten what he required, he began to think of the absentees, and Knip's little wallet was accordingly filled with the strawberries; and as we were quite alive to the danger of leaving the fruit in such very close proximity to the gluttonous little carrier, we took care to cover up the wallet with leaves and twigs, so as to keep the fruit secure from the monkey's clutches. I added to the contents of the wallet a handful of rice, for I knew my wife would be much pleased to see that we had made a discovery of such a healthful and nourishing plant, and I was not sorry to have the opportunity to have it put to the test as to whether it was actually rice or not.

As we continued our course, we arrived at the place where the marsh joined the lake, which we could then admire close by our feet. The locality appeared to be one of the most beautiful and fertile spots of the island which we had hitherto discovered. Birds of every kind were abundant; but those which surprised us most were two black swans which were swimming majestically upon the lake. Their feathers were perfectly black and shining, all except those at the extremity of the tail,

which were white. In other respects the swans exactly resembled the European species in movement and all else, and they were most graceful birds.

Ernest was very anxious to try his skill at shooting one of them, but I positively forbade him to do so. I should have reproached myself very much had I permitted him to disturb the charming and profound peace the birds were enjoying. But the dog, less sensible of the beauties of nature, darted after the swans before I could prevent him ; but, in fact,



DUCK-BILLED PLATYPUS.

he did not fly at the birds at all, but at an animal which was swimming calmly about on the lake, and brought it to our feet.

It was something like an otter of a peculiar description. Its four feet were webbed like the feet of aquatic birds ; its tail was long and bushy, and it carried it erect in the air ; its head was small ; its eyes and ears hardly discernible ; and to complete this curious *ensemble*, it possessed a flat bill like a duck.

Although it had some resemblance to the otter, its form was too novel and fantastic for us to class it amongst that species of animal. We

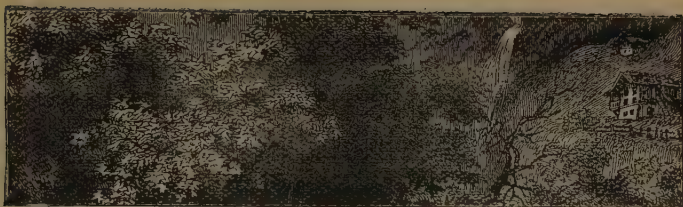
really began to think that we had made a discovery in natural history, and that the animal was in truth unknown to man; so we hesitated to name it. At length, as it was not otherwise recognisable, we boldly called it "the Beast with a Bill" (Schnabelthier), and I desired Ernest to carry it home, as I wished to stuff it as a curiosity.

"I think I know what it is, father," said he at last. "It is an *ornithorhynchus*. I have read descriptions of them in some of the captain's books."

"Well," I replied, laughing, "at any rate it shall be the nucleus of our cabinet of Natural History."

Laden with our prizes, we regained the farm almost at the same time as Fritz and Jack, who came to tell us all they had done at Falcon's Nest; and I heard with satisfaction that not only had they followed out my instructions, but that they had thought of many other things besides.





CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Apes.—Stone-pines.—Prospect Hill.—The Canoe.—A Pet for Frank.—The Cavern again.



THE day following the events related in the last chapter, having abundantly provided for our beasts, we quitted the farm, which we had named Waldegg, and directed our homeward course towards the Monkey's Wood, which we had not visited since we had first encountered the apes therein. It was chiefly composed of fir-trees very similar to those of Europe, and amongst which our little caravan wandered with much pleasure.

But suddenly we perceived a troop of apes which were flying from our approach. These malicious animals, having gained a safe distance amongst the trees, saluted us with a terrible fire of large fir-cones, accompanying each discharge of these missiles with the most piercing cries imaginable. But two or three discharges of our guns, loaded with small shot, soon put them to flight. The boys picked up some of the fruit which the monkeys had showered upon us and brought them to me. I immediately recognised the stone-pine, of which the kernel is good to eat and also yields an excellent oil. No sooner was Fritz made aware of the quality of the kernel, than he was anxious to taste it, and sought for some means to break the thick shell. He could find nothing more convenient than a large stone, and was about to operate on the cone with it, when I called out,—

“Wait! wait! Do not be in such a hurry at our first halting-place. When we have a fire I will show you a much better method of opening those fir-apples, without breaking the covering. You have only to put it on the fire, and it will very soon go off like a pistol shot, and the almond will jump out unharmed.”

"That will be capital," exclaimed all the boys, and they immediately began to collect as many of the fir-apples as they could find on the spot.

After this short halt we resumed our journey to within a short distance of Cape Disappointment, where we halted for a time and deliberated whether or not we should traverse the ridge which rose up to the right. The council decided in the affirmative, and we proceeded.

When we gained the summit we were well repaid for our trouble by the prospect. The panorama embraced on one side the whole extent of country towards Falcon's Nest, on the other side we had a splendid view of the sea and of the cape. All the country was fertile and glowing:



fresh green meadows, limpid streams, flowering trees, birds singing in the woods, etc.

"Oh, my boys," I exclaimed, "this is indeed Arcadia. Let us fix our tent at once, and build a hut here later, so as to make it a permanent halting place."

"Yes, yes, father," they all cried; "but let us first fix upon some name for this beautiful spot."

In good German I suggested that we should call it simply Schauenbourg or Schattenbourg, but Ernest proposed the name of *Prospect Hill*. This appeared appropriate, and was prettier, so it was unanimously adopted.

We all now set to with new ardour to construct the new farmhouse,

and as we had already served our apprenticeship we succeeded now with less trouble and in less time. We felt very happy, and not a little proud to be able to leave here and there as we proceeded these traces of our passage.

Meanwhile I had not forgotten the true end and aim of our excursion—the canoe. We had ostensibly come out to search for a tree whose bark would suffice to make a canoe, but hitherto the construction of our farmhouses had prevented our setting about boat-building. We now returned to our first project. We took exact measurements of all the trees in the neighbourhood, and particularly of those which were nearest to the river, so that the canoe once constructed we might have less difficulty in launching her into the sea. At length I halted by a species of oak, the bark of which is more flexible than the European oak, and which bore a resemblance to the cork-tree. The trunk was about five feet in diameter.

With a saw I traced a circle around the foot of the stem, and cut through the bark. Then having fixed the rope ladder to the lowest branches I made Fritz ascend it, and he repeated the operation at an elevation of eighteen feet from the ground. When he had traced his circle in the bark, I cut a third incision perpendicularly between the two circles, and by these means we were enabled to detach a large portion of the bark. Afterwards, with the assistance of wedges and a hammer, I worked hard to detach the remainder.

This was a very difficult and delicate operation, and it was necessary to proceed very carefully. The first part came away easily enough, but the latter part resisted longer; but after awhile we were entirely recompensed for all our trouble and care by seeing the entire covering fall away from the tree, and the stem stand out completely denuded of its bark.

I uttered an exclamation of triumph as loud as my boys' yells of delight, and I determined to set about forming the canoe while the bark was still flexible and easily to be manipulated. My sons were of opinion that we had only to nail two planks on at each end of the roll of bark to complete the boat at once. But I reminded them that such a craft would cut but a sorry figure beside our graceful pinnace, and also that there were some few considerations respecting utility and convenience to be attended to. But the argument respecting the pinnace had the greatest effect with the boys. They accordingly determined to give me time, and wait till I could achieve a worthy boat.

I made a cutting at each end of the roll of bark, about four or five feet from the extremities. I then folded the portions cut away one over the other; by crossing them and fastening them firmly with pegs, I managed to make a sharp bow and stern for my canoe. This operation

had, however, separated the sides too much in the centre of the roll, but I remedied this by tying strong cords round that portion, which brought the sides more together and gave the canoe the desired depth. I then exposed my frail bark to the sun's rays, while I took great care that it retained the shape and dimensions I had given it.

I was in want of many necessary tools and implements to put the finishing touches to my canoe, so Jack and Fritz were despatched to Zeltheim to procure all that was required. They hurried away, accompanied by the ass, which they took for the purpose of drawing the sledge with which they expected to return laden. It was mounted on four wheels, and would also prove very useful to transport our canoe should we find it necessary to carry it to Zeltheim.

During the boys' absence I went into the wood with Ernest to find some wood wherewith to make ribs to support the sides of the boat within. I was fortunate enough to discover a pine with pointed leaves which produced a fruit the coverings of which seemed fashioned expressly for the purpose. We also found a species of pitch which came from a resinous tree which was very easy to work, dried quickly in the sun, and which promised to be still more serviceable for "pitching" the bark canoe than even the gum-mastic or the terebinth. My wife and Frank collected a quantity of it. It was almost dark when the messengers returned with the sledge, and as it was too late to do any thing more that night, we retired to rest.

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Very early on the following morning we placed the canoe, the wood, the pitch, etc., on the sledge, and set off for Zeltheim. We stopped at Falcon's Nest only two hours, just time enough to get some dinner and to give our animals rest.

We returned to our tent some time before sunset, but too tired to do anything more that evening. The whole of the following day we expended in fitting up the canoe. To strengthen her I nailed two curved pieces of wood fore and aft, and also a plank running the whole length, as a solid keel. We also raised the freeboard a little, and fixed rings on the gunwale, through which we could pass the paddles and the rigging, or ropes, when necessary.

I put in a quantity of stones and earth for ballast, and covered it all with a neat planking upon which we could move about comfortably. Moveable benches were placed across. In the midst our mast rose up and was furnished with a triangular sail. I also put in a rudder.

A happy thought struck me by which I fancied I could make my light boat still lighter. I caused my wife to make some vessels of the skins of the dogfish, which I filled with air, pitched up tightly, and

then suspended all round the gunwales. These bladders not only rendered the boat more buoyant, but prevented her from heeling over and filling.

I have forgotten to mention the birth of a calf which our cow presented to us a little after the rainy season was over. This animal was already of a good size, and I thought it was time to employ him in some useful manner. One evening I asked the advice of the assembled family on this subject. Ernest thought that we might train him up for fighting, as the Hottentots do, and when his brothers remarked upon this curious advice,—

"Those people," said Ernest, "inhabit a country infested with wild beasts. The herds which constitute their sole wealth would very soon be annihilated if they did not train up some animals to fight. These brave animals watch over the flocks of their masters and take care to keep the herd together. When they perceive any danger they force the herd into a circle, the weakest animals being in the centre, while the rest range themselves around. As the enemy advances he finds himself face to face with a rampart of long horns, and it is very seldom that he ventures to attack under such circumstances. The lion, however, is not even thus intimidated, and the protector is frequently obliged to sacrifice himself in the defence of his charge. These courageous animals are often employed by the Hottentots in the intestine wars waged by the tribes, and it is to their valour that the conquerors are frequently indebted for the victory."

This recital pleased the other boys very much, but as we had no herds to protect, nor any likelihood of war, it was simply resolved that we should bring up the young animal in the ordinary manner; and it now only remained to decide to which of the children his education should be confided.

The indolent Ernest said the ape was quite as much as he could attend to; Fritz was already sufficiently occupied with the onagra; Jack, the most energetic of all, had his hands full also, as the buffalo and jackal claimed all his attention; the donkey was my wife's special care; while I had the general superintendence of all the animals. Frank alone had no pet to look after.

"Well, my little man," I said, "will you undertake to educate the calf?"

"Oh, yes, father," he exclaimed, clapping his hands; "the calf is very pretty, and I will be so kind to him. I will give him what he likes best, and though I am very young I will do it quite well. I will call him Brummer on the spot, for I can hear him grumbling here at this moment."

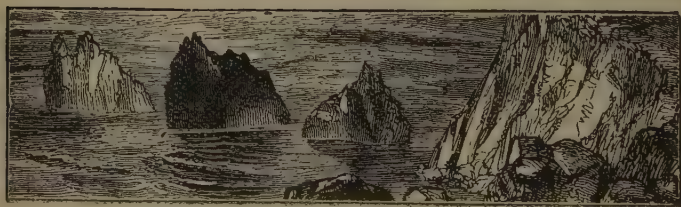
This name was approved by all the boys, who immediately set about

naming the buffalo and the dogs. Jack suggested that the buffalo be called "Storm," for he thought it very grand to hear any one say, "Here comes Jack riding on the Storm!" The dogs we named Brown and Fawn, according to their colour.

For two whole months we worked hard to increase the accommodation of the different compartments in the cavern, and to make it as pleasant as possible; we waited till the rains came on to embellish it inside.

The great quantity of beams, planks, and other materials we possessed rendered our work less difficult than most people would suppose.

The floor of our cavern was covered with a thick layer of loam, interspersed with flat pebbles, placed close together and plastered over, as I counted upon the last few days of summer to dry it; we plastered the walls also. I then thought of making a kind of carpet with the goats' skins and the fleeces of the sheep, which I steeped in boiling water and covered with isinglass; I afterwards rolled this carpet in sail-cloth and beat it with heavy sticks. The boiling process was then resumed, and having beaten it long and vigorously we opened the sail-cloth and detached a long roll of felt, which, dried in the sun, was perfectly adapted to the end we desired. Our carpet was not a Turkey fabric, but it had its own peculiar advantages nevertheless.





CHAPTER XXIX.

An auspicious Anniversary.—Reading the Journal.—Holiday Amusements.—Distribution of Prizes.—End of the Holiday.



NE morning after these laborious days' work I happened to wake somewhat earlier than usual. Not wishing to disturb my family, I lay quietly awake and began to reckon how long it was since we had been wrecked upon the island.

By exactly computing the time, I discovered that the anniversary of our deliverance would fall upon the very next day. Full of thankfulness to Heaven, I could not resist offering a prayer.

I determined, moreover, not to permit such an auspicious day to pass without marking it in a befitting manner. I immediately got up, awoke my wife and children, and hurried breakfast forward. As I had not yet arranged the plan of the festival, I said nothing, and our work proceeded as usual, though I myself made a few preparations. At length, that evening at supper I announced my intention in these terms,—

"My dear friends," I said, "I hope you will all prepare to celebrate the anniversary of our providential deliverance to-morrow, with all due solemnity."

This announcement gave manifest pleasure to all. My wife exclaimed,—

"But is it possible that we have been living a whole year on this island. How short the time appears!"

"Yes, indeed!" cried the children, "it scarcely seems a year since we were shipwrecked."

"That is because we have been fully occupied all the time," I replied. "Time flies on rapid wings when people are busy; while to the idle it passes like a tortoise."

"Are you quite sure your calculation is right?" said my wife. "Is your almanack correct?"

"We count neither weeks nor months," I replied. "We are in the midst of eternity."

"What do you mean, papa?" exclaimed Fritz. "Eternity? So, this lovely country is Paradise! Why, then, do we still eat and drink?"

"My dear boy," said my wife, "you are too young to understand your father's meaning altogether; and to tell you the truth, I am not myself quite certain what he intends."

"My dear," I replied, "it wanted just a month to the end of the year when we embarked. Our vessel was wrecked at the end of January; according to my calendar, then, we had eleven months to run to the end of the year. As I calculate, to-day is the first of February, for we have been a month without a calendar. We landed on this island on the second of February, so we have to celebrate the anniversary of our landing to-morrow. But as my library will not provide me with a new almanack, we must devise some method of reckoning the time."

A long conversation ensued as to the best method of keeping a reckoning.

Ernest suggested that we should keep account, like Robinson Crusoe, by means of notches on a stick.

This did not appear a bad suggestion, and I questioned him closely respecting the calendar and his mode of keeping it. His replies surprised me greatly. So I jokingly named Ernest the astronomer, and made over to him the care of all the clocks on the island. I pressed him on one point, however.

"You know that the year has 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 43 seconds. So far very well, my young professor; but do not these odd hours and minutes put you out in your calculations a little?"

"Not at all," he replied. "We add up all the odd time every four years, which will give us a little more than a day. This we add to the month of February, to make leap-year."

"Father," said Fritz, "I never can recollect which months have thirty, and which have thirty-one days in the year."

"You carry a calendar on your hand!"

"A calendar on my hand?" exclaimed Jack.

"Yes. Shut your left hand, and look at the back of it. Now, without reckoning your thumb, what do you see?"

"Nothing at all," replied Jack.

"And you, Fritz?"

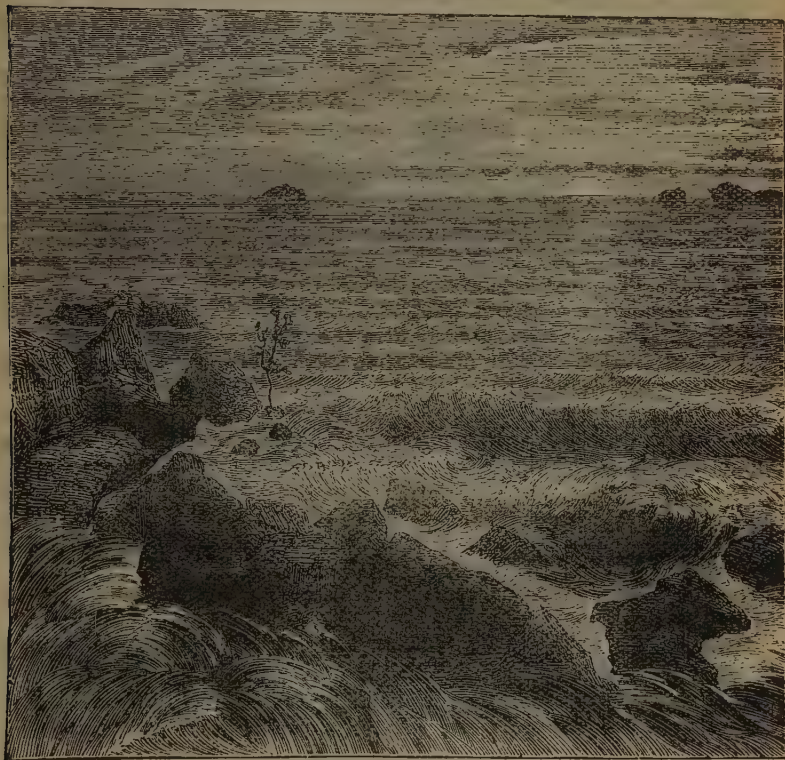
"I see four little bones, and three hollows between them."

"Well, then, now name the months of the year; beginning with the bone of the first finger, and come back again when you have reached

the bone of the little finger. Now, after you have given a month to each bone and hollow, what have you?"

"I find that January, March, May, July, August, October, and December fall upon the bones, and the other months upon the hollows."

"That is the whole secret. The bones give you the months which have thirty-one days, and the hollows those which possess thirty or less,



as in the case of February, which has twenty-eight, except in leap-year, when it takes twenty-nine days."

After having chatted a little on other subjects, we retired.

For some time after I had gone to bed I could hear the boys talking about the expected festivities of the morrow, and wondering what I had prepared for the festival. But I did not take any notice of their conversation.

Next morning at daybreak we were aroused by the report of a cannon. We hastened out to ascertain the meaning of this detonation, and having made diligent search, we found that neither Fritz nor Jack were present to give an opinion. I thought they were still enjoying a calm sleep, and was about to go and awaken them, when Jack came in radiant, and exclaimed,—

“Ah, ha! didn't we turn you out of bed pretty quickly!”

But Fritz, who was more observant, observed my face cloud; and fearing that I was displeased, cried out,—

“Oh, my dear parents, forgive us for having ushered in the solemnity of the day with the firing of a cannon. Indeed, we only did it to render the day more solemn; and never thought that we should disturb you so rudely.”

“You see the result,” I replied; “and you have given us a gratuitous alarm on our feast day. However, let not the harmony of the occasion be spoiled by it. I forgive your blunder under the circumstances, but next time I trust you will act with more circumspection.”

After this little interlude, we proceeded to complete our toilettes, and had prayers. We had breakfast, and then we all sat down together before our grotto to talk seriously over the object of our holiday.

I commenced by reading my journal, in order to refresh our memories respecting the events of our unfortunate shipwreck.

I recalled to my auditory the benefits which Providence had bestowed upon us, and read some extracts from the Psalms. We then all engaged in a serious conversation respecting our deliverance.

I reminded my children of the great benefits we had received, and a long and very interesting conversation lasted until dinner time. My wife then got up to prepare the meal, while the boys set about some necessary work.

In due time my wife summoned us to dinner. We found that she had prepared two fine fowls, which looked splendid on our table.

After an excellent repast, I said to the boys, “Let us now wind up the day by some useful amusements. The happiness we all enjoy is due in a great measure to your skill and abilities. You are free to perform all sorts of exercises. You go forth as brave knights to fight before your mother and me, and we, like the judges of old, will reward the conquerors.” So, I exclaimed, turning towards the duck-pond, “Trumpeters, sound the onset!”

The unfortunate ducks, alarmed by the sound of my raised voice and the movement of my arm, immediately set up a most discordant cackle. “The trumpet sounds,” I exclaimed. “To the lists, noble knights!”

“But how shall we begin?” asked the knights.

I suggested they should commence by shooting with gun and pistol, then proceed to horsemanship, racing, the lasso, and swimming.

The boys had been practising all these exercises for a whole year, partly forced by necessity, partly for amusement on Sundays, and I expected to enjoy the sight.

So we placed a mark against the rock about a hundred paces distant. The target was a plank about the size of a sheep or kangaroo. We trimmed the wood with our hatchets so as to give it something the appearance of the animal. My boys stuck up two small pieces of wood for ears. A strap served for a tail. The plank was fixed obliquely so as to represent the kangaroo seated on the ground with its head up. Two sticks supported the body and served as fore-legs.

The shooting commenced. Of this part little Frank was only a



spectator. The other three boys loaded their guns with ball, and were to have two shots each. Fritz hit the "kangaroo" twice in the head. Ernest hit it once in the body. Jack by a fortunate shot sheared off its ears close to the head. This shot made us all laugh heartily.

In the second trial with pistols, when they came nearer to the target, Fritz surpassed his brothers. They afterwards essayed to fire at a small piece of wood which I threw up in the air as high as I could; I

noticed with surprise that at this Ernest was as adroit and even more so than Fritz, while Jack did not hit it at all.

Next came the trial with bows and arrows. I always made a great point of this, as it might prove extremely useful to us if powder ever failed us. I saw with pleasure that the elder boys were very good, though even little Frank acquitted himself very well. After a short interval we arranged the races. I knew exactly what time it ought to take to get to the grotto at Falcon's Nest in a direct line. This is why I chose that goal, and I told the competitors that whoever brought me my knife which I had left on the table should receive the prize.

I gave the signal by clapping my hands three times. Of course little Frank did not compete. Jack and Fritz started like deer. Ernest, on the contrary, set off at a more even and leisurely pace, which seemed to me very prudent, as he would not be so likely to be fatigued as soon as his brothers.

In fact, at the expiration of three quarters of an hour my expectations were realized. Nevertheless, at first I did not quite understand matters, for though Jack appeared first, he was mounted upon his buffalo and was followed by the onagra. That made me think that all the lads had returned riding.

"Hallo, my brave cavalier," I exclaimed; "this is not fair-play. You ought to have used your own legs only—you cannot have the prize."

"But!" he exclaimed, as he jumped from his buffalo, "did you think I would kill myself for the prize. No, thank you, father."

Fritz soon arrived very much exhausted, while about fifty paces behind him came Ernest, who held in his hand the knife which proclaimed him the winner.

As soon as the boys were rested I demanded some explanation of the riddle. Jack, who was naturally the first to recover his breath, cried out,—

"Oh! 'twas a fine race. But when I saw Ernest going along with his elbows pressed to his sides and such a steady pace, and Fritz bounding away like a stag, I perceived that it was quite useless my attempting to compete. So I gave up all idea of the prize, and mounted my buffalo to see the result, and it was not without difficulty that I overtook them, either. The ass and the onagra followed me of their own accord. That's all!"

"But," I said, "how comes it that Ernest has got the knife, and not Fritz?"

"That is easily explained," said Ernest. "I arrived at Falcon's Nest just before Fritz, who was somewhat 'blown' by his exertions; but, in returning, he moderated his speed and followed my example. Thus, being older than I am, he naturally outran me."

"Very well, my boys," I said, "you have both proved your agility and sagacity, and have covered the distance in a shorter time than I could have believed possible."

"What time did we take?" asked Ernest.

"Going at a good pace," I replied, "and taking the shortest way, I usually allow thirty-five minutes to reach Falcon's Nest from here, but you have only taken fifty minutes to go and return."

"But, father," said Jack, "when shall we begin the horsemanship? I am very desirous to rub out the disgrace of my late defeat."



I accordingly gave the signal for the "sports in the ring" to commence at once, and I was astonished at the skill displayed by Jack. He completely eclipsed his brothers, and did not prove less skilful as a "circus rider," but in this Fritz rivalled him. He galloped without saddle or bridle, and frequently jumped off and remounted again by seizing the mane. Ernest, though he was a capital rider, did not attempt any of these tricks of horsemanship.

Little Frank, also anxious to show us what he could do, appeared in

the arena mounted upon his young bull. My wife had made him a saddle of kangaroo skin, he had two stirrups, he held a whip in one hand, and a bridle which was passed through the animal's nose, in the other.

"Gentlemen," said the little rider, saluting us in a comically graceful manner, "you behold the famous bull-tamer Milo, of Crotona, who will have the honour to show you his tricks and at the same time give you a specimen of his power of equitation."

"That's not so bad, master rider," exclaimed Jack; and Ernest remarked, "Do you intend to emulate this acrobat, Fritz?"

"No," replied Fritz, "equipped as he is, Frank cannot fail to triumph over us all."

But Frank was in no degree put out by these jokes, and he immediately began to put the bull through his paces. The lad displayed a courage and skill beyond his years. And what struck us most of all was the talent with which he had trained his steed. The rider made him walk slowly, trot, or gallop, and amused us all by the manner in which he endeavoured to imitate the voice of a stentor, which appeared to him to be necessary to the commander of our herds. We saw the bull at the boy's command suddenly stop short in the midst of a gallop, fall on his knees like a camel, then get up and bellow, turn round his tail till it formed a circle, and pretend to turn up the ground with his head as yet unfurnished with horns. The animal was as docile in carrying and dragging a load.

My wife then turned to us and said: "Well, now, what do you think of my pupils?"

"There can be no doubt of your complete success," I replied. "You deserve all praise, for we have seen nothing more amusing than their performances."

"What particularly pleased me," said Ernest, was the way in which the bull lay down to be mounted by Frank. How did you teach him to do that mother?"

"As the Arabs teach their camels," replied she. "We had some trouble to make him bend his knees; but we placed a sail-cloth on his back, which descended to the ground. To keep this in position we placed very heavy stones on each side, and we only fed the animal thus kneeling. That soon made him obedient, but the ring we passed through his nose was of great assistance to us."

"Ah! I wish my buffalo was trained like the bull," said Jack. "Frank, will you exchange? My buffalo is bigger."

"No," replied Frank. "You see the cleverness of my bull is much preferable to the size of your buffalo. Am I not right, papa?"

"Quite," I replied.



"I will keep my bull, then," said Frank ; "and you will see, papa, that he will amuse you more some other time."

"I quite believe it," I replied; "and I hope he will cause you even more amusement, and of a better and more lasting kind. But we have not thrown the lassoes yet!"

The boys immediately set about this game, and threw them at a piece of wood which I had stuck up in the ground. The cords touched it, and the folds wound round and enveloped it. Jack and Ernest were more successful than Fritz, who threw too hard, and consequently beyond the mark. On the whole, I was not so well satisfied with this exercise as with the others; and by way of arousing the enthusiasm of the boys, I suggested that we should make an expedition against the gazelles and antelopes in the savannahs as soon as I thought them sufficiently expert at this game. Our festival was brought to a close by a swimming match, in which Fritz had no rival. He swam like a Triton, now upon, now beneath the water, and appeared quite in his element, while his movements betrayed neither exertion nor fatigue. Ernest, on the contrary, showed some caution, and even timidity; while Jack, going too vigorously to work, soon collapsed. Frank, I was glad to perceive, would become a swimmer one day, as well as a bold rider.

These various contests occupied us till evening. We then returned in procession along the beach to our dwelling. My wife had gone on a little in front to prepare for the great distribution of prizes. She seated herself in state on a cask covered with leaves. All the boys, the youngest first, deployed before her.

They then ranged themselves in a line in front of the throne, while the queen, in imitation of the prize-givers of old, handed the reward to the successful competitor with a few words of praise, accompanied by a kiss.

Fritz was the prize-taker for the shooting and swimming. He received a double-barrelled English gun and a hunting knife, which he had long desired. Ernest, the victor in the race and in lasso-throwing, received a gold watch like his brother's. Jack, as a reward for his horsemanship, received a pair of steel spurs and a whip. Frank had a pair of stirrups and a long rhinoceros-hide whip, as a reward for the skill he had displayed in training his bull.

After the distribution, I offered my wife a beautiful English "Ladies' Companion," which contained all the objects so much prized by women: there were thimbles, scissors, needles, pins, bodkins, etc., etc.

"This token of your services," I said, "is more than deserved for your care and kindness and the devotion you have exhibited to us all, and for the trouble you have taken, which has so greatly contributed to the children's success."

The day concluded as it had begun, with prayer and praise.



CHAPTER XXX.

Falcon's Nest.—Bird-lime for Ortolans.—Gourds.—The Ginseng.—The Marmot.—
The Apes again.—The Anise Root.



OME little time after our fête day we recollected that about this period in the preceding year we had hunted the ortolans, etc., in the great tree at Falcon's Nest. We had killed a great number, and my wife had preserved some in oil. Not wishing to lose the opportunity of replenishing our stock of provisions by such a delicate addition to our winter food, we went up to Falcon's Nest as soon as we were of opinion that the birds had made their appearance there. Nevertheless, in order to economize our powder as much as possible, I sought some means to obtain the birds without its aid. I recollected that in the Pellew Islands they succeed with a sort of birdlime made from liquid caoutchouc, and by this they manage to take great numbers of birds, even peacocks. Our supply of caoutchouc being put aside to give us waterproof shoes, I desired Jack and Fritz to go and procure as much as ever they could collect during one day. Perhaps they might find a sufficient quantity at the foot of a single tree; for on our last excursion we had taken care to make incisions in the bark of several trees, and to place beneath them calabashes to catch the liquid that ran out from them. We had also placed green leaves in such a position and sufficient quantity to prevent the sun from drying up the caoutchouc.

Jack and Fritz were delighted at the prospect of the expedition. They supplied themselves with calabashes and fire-arms, and, followed by the dogs, set out on their favourite steeds.

After they had departed my wife suddenly exclaimed, striking her forehead as if in perplexity as she spoke, "How stupid of me, to be sure! I quite forgot to give the boys those vases, which are much more

convenient than the ordinary calabashes, which have no necks, and which can only be carried on the head or with both hands. I do not know how they will manage to carry the gum without spilling a quantity of it."

"You may be quite easy on the subject," I replied. "You have only allowed the boys to exercise their common sense and their imagination a little. No doubt, however, the old vessels will serve this time. But what did you want to give them? and why have you not done so?"

"I had not time," she replied; "and besides, I did not know whether they were ready, or whether they were even available."

"What do you mean?" I asked, "and what are *they*? You have piqued my curiosity a little."

"I can scarcely believe that. But give me a moment or two to remember where I put them. You know we have planted and sown things in a number of places, and I am not quite certain where I shall pitch upon what I require. I remember. I mean the ordinary gourds, those which pilgrims and soldiers frequently carry with them, and also another species which take the shape of bottles."

"My dear wife," I exclaimed, "what an excellent discovery you have made! Where did you find the seeds to sow such gourds? Why have you never told me about them?"

"I wished to surprise you. But, besides, the incident had almost escaped my memory. I found the pips in a case of seeds which we saved from the wreck, and I sowed them when we dug up the potatoes. So come along; the plantation is not far distant, I think, and we shall not have very much trouble to find them."

We immediately set out, followed by Ernest and Frank, and before long we reached a place where a number of circuitous plants were growing. Some were ripe, others only half ripe. There were some scarcely in flower, while others again were dying off. We chose those whose stalks were withered and whose covering was as hard as horn. We saw there were two species of gourds, and we cut as many as we could carry, and decided to come again another day for all the rest that were likely to prove useful.

We returned laden with spoil, and immediately began to clean out the gourds. Having cleared them out and taken away the pips, we threw a few shot into each and shook them about violently in order to scour the inside completely. Before long the gourds were perfectly clean within and without, and we found ourselves possessed of a number of really good bottles.

We made funnels of those gourds whose necks were very narrow, and of the other parts plates and dishes.

This work occupied us till evening. Ernest had more than once

desired to exchange his knife for his gun, so as to kill some ortolans which had perched in the fig-trees. But I prevented him, as I was afraid that the shots would not reach the birds; and besides, I felt we ought to husband our gunpowder.

Suddenly I heard the noise of hoofs, and looking up we beheld our two cavaliers returning at full speed. They threw themselves from their steeds, and after the usual greetings were over, I asked,—

“Well, have you done your business properly?”

“Yes, very well indeed,” replied Fritz. “We have made some new discoveries too. Here is a crane, and some ‘monkey’s roots,’ as we called it, because we found the apes eating them. I have brought you an immense calabash of caoutchouc, and I have plugged it up with grass.”



MARMOT.

“And,” exclaimed Jack, “here is another filled with the same resin. Here is a badger or a marmot besides. And look, here is a plant of anise with roots, and a calabash half full of terebinth.”

We examined all these things and complimented them on their success. Then Jack said,—

“Ah, my buffalo has had a hard day to-day! He has felt the spurs, I can assure you. I am afraid I nearly broke his wind, and we fell once. Oh, my dear father! you really must make us saddles, so that we shall not have any more tumbles to fear.”

“I did think of doing so one day,” I replied, “but other things drove it out of my head.”

"But, Jack," interrupted Ernest, "this animal is neither a badger nor a marmot. It is quite an unknown species to me."

"Let me look at it," I said.

"I killed it on a rock," said Jack, "and I thought that perhaps it lived in the caves or in the mountains."

"You are not very far wrong," I said. "The animal appears to me to belong to the race of *cavia*, for we have already seen them without having been able to procure a specimen. It is probably the bastard marmot of the Cape (*cavia capeensis*), which inhabits holes in the rocks. But tell me, Jack, how did you get this plant of anise?"

"I took it first for cummin," he replied, "but when I tasted it I found that it was the anise, and that we can make excellent aniseed from it. The stalk instead of breaking came up bodily by the roots, and I perceived it was tuberous. Its delicious smell impelled me to taste it. But Fritz prevented me, saying that the root, if it was not the true anise, might be as poisonous as the manioc. I collected a quantity at any rate on speculation, and we met our old sow and her young, which began to eat the roots with avidity, as well as the stalks and pips which were very tender. Under these circumstances we had no longer any doubt, so we tested the roots, and grilled they are excellent."

"But," I said, "how did you get this terebinth, which I think more valuable than all your aniseed?"

"We found it on the trunks of those trees beneath which we had placed our calabashes."

"This substance," I said, "will serve us in the composition of our bird-lime. You have made some very useful discoveries. And you, Fritz, what is this 'monkey plant' you were talking about? Have you tasted it? Is it good to eat?"

"I think so," replied Fritz. "But before anything else I must tell you about my eagle which has distinguished himself to-day."

"We were proceeding towards the side of the rocks where the india-rubber trees grow, and were collecting the caoutchouc in our calabashes, and all the resin that had oozed out. We also made some new openings and placed empty vessels beneath, and covered them all over with a little penthouse of leaves."

"This work occupied us a great part of the morning, and to fill up the interval to dinner-time we made a little excursion in the neighbourhood. There it was that Jack saw the marmot in the rocks. He fired and hit it, though I should have bet he would have missed it."

"As we passed near the candleberry-trees," continued Fritz, "we noticed that they were laden with new berries. So we collected a quantity of them and put them in our pockets. Finally, I noticed that the caoutchouc-trees were covered with little figs, and that the ortolans

were eating them with great relish, although I should have fancied that the fruit was less palatable than the other figs."

"Then quitting the rocky ground, we advanced towards the Lake of Swans to visit our new farm.

"Suddenly, in a clearing, we perceived a troop of apes. We approached them on foot gently, to see what they were about, for we had tied up



the steeds and the dogs to the trees so as not to alarm the monkeys. These amusing animals were occupied in digging up the roots. Curious to see what they were eating so greedily, we let go the dogs, and the apes fled at full speed. They all escaped with the exception of two, which were captured and eaten by the dogs before we could arrive to their assistance. This sudden flight left us a quantity of roots, half-eaten,

it is true. Jack at first thought that they were radishes, but on examination I perceived that they were some other, but very similar plant. The pleasure and impunity with which the monkeys devoured them emboldened us to taste them. We found that they possessed an aromatic odour and were agreeable to the taste, but somewhat bitter. They do resemble our radish, no doubt, and we have wrapped some in their leaves to show you."

"I do not know the plant of my own experience," I said, interrupting his narrative, "but from what I recollect of my botany I should say that it is the famous *ginseng* of China.

"The *ginseng* is regarded by the Chinese as a sacred plant and as an universal panacea, to which is attributed the virtue of prolonging life. The Emperor of China alone has the privilege of gathering it, and he places sentinels over the places where it grows. Nevertheless the plant is also found in Tartary, and it is said in Canada too; but it is certain that the Americans have commenced to import a large quantity from China by smuggling.

"If my suspicions are correct there will be a good sale for it if we should ever again meet with civilized people; and I believe that this island cannot be very far distant from China."

"Well," continued Fritz, "after having packed up the roots we placed them on our steeds and continued our route to the farm. But, gracious! what a scene of desolation met our gaze, everything was turned topsy-turvy. The covering of our beds thrown hither and thither, the fodder strewn about, the fowls had disappeared, and the sheep and the goats had run away in terror!"

"It was all owing to those beastly apes," said Jack, "perhaps the very same that we had surprised eating the roots; oh, how I regretted then that I had not taken vengeance on them."

"It will now be necessary," I said, "to repair the damage which those animals have done, so that we may not have greater losses, which may not be so easy to put up with. Fortunately we are in some degree indemnified by the discovery of that precious root."

Fritz then related that his eagle, when he unhooded him after a flock of cranes, had flown rapidly into the air and very quickly brought one of those fine birds to the ground.

At supper-time we tasted the roots of the anise and of the *ginseng*, which we had cooked for the purpose. They proved to be savoury and nourishing. I remarked that the anise passed at the Cape for a very nutritious root, and was often found in the market—but the *ginseng*—if this was the *ginseng*—required more precaution, for its aromatic qualities were heating to the blood, and a too frequent use of it might possibly be followed by unpleasant consequences.



CHAPTER XXXI.

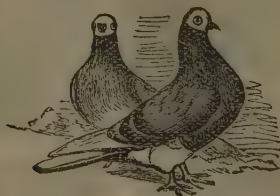
Bird-lime.—Great Take of Ortolans.—We declare War against the Monkeys.—Capture of Pigeons.



NEXT day, as soon as we had finished our morning avocations, we set ourselves seriously to work. I sent the boys to collect switches, and I began to mix the liquid caoutchouc with a certain quantity of oil and terebinth. I placed this mixture on the fire, and by stirring the compound I obtained a very excellent bird-lime. When my boys returned with a quantity of switches, I spread the bird-lime upon them, and then went to ascertain what were the most advantageous spots for me to put them in.

I soon perceived that the previous year we had only had to do with the stragglers of the great army of ortolans, for this year they were so numerous that a blind man striking at the trees would not fail to knock them down in dozens. As I presumed, the ortolans retired to this tree for the night. I determined to have a torch-light chase, as the Virginians do, if our traps did not furnish us with sufficient game.

My sons had meantime spread a quantity of the bird-lime, and I mounted Jack into the great fig-tree. He spread the sticky substance on the branches most laden with fruit, and placed his twigs obliquely from spray to spray. Scarcely had he fixed a dozen or so, and descended, when the ortolans began to return home. The unfortunate birds, perching upon the treacherous switches, got their feet stuck tightly; essayed to fly, but their feathers touching the bird-limed branches, they soon got caught by the wings, and finally tumbled helpless at our feet. The same supply of branches served three or four times, and we only troubled ourselves to spread the bird-lime. Fritz and Jack remounted many times into the tree, while Ernest, Frank, and



their mother had to pick up and pluck the birds. This chase pleased the boys very much, and I let them pursue it by themselves; for I wished to settle the preliminaries of the torch-light chase I had thought of, as I fancied the bird-liming process would occupy too much time before our provision would be completed.

While I was at work Jack brought me a very pretty bird, and asked me whether he was to kill it too.

"I should be very sorry to do so," he added, "for we have become quite friends already."

Ernest also came up to us. "I believe," he said, "it is one of our own European pigeons which we let fly. We ought not to kill it, perhaps it may breed here."

I took the bird in my hands, and I saw that Ernest was not mistaken. So I rubbed the soles of its feet with ashes, and its wings also, and I let the bird run into the hen-house, having given my *aides* instructions to keep all the pigeons they caught. We took several more of them, and by sunset we were possessed of two beautiful pairs of wood-pigeons.



VIRGINIAN TORCH LIGHT CHASE FOR ORTOLANS.

Fritz advised a plan, which I agreed to, as it tended to save powder and shot: this was to build a dove-cot over the house in the rock, so that we could be always sure of a pigeon, if at any time we wanted one for the table. I promised to erect a cote as soon as we had brought our expedition against the monkeys to a conclusion.

Meantime, though our success with the ortolans had been very great, we had not as yet sufficient to fill a single barrel. So, as soon as night fell, and after we had had supper, we set out upon this new sporting expedition. My preparations had not occupied much time. Our only arms were bamboo canes, some bags, and torches, for the composition of which, in the absence of pitch, we made use of resin and terebinth. My boys were rather sceptical of success with such appurtenances.

The night, which in these latitudes succeeds almost immediately to the sunset, was extremely dark. As soon as we reached the trees in which the ortolans were roosting, we lighted our torches. Awakened and half-blinded by the glare, the birds began to fly about in an aimless and vacillating manner.

We seized our bamboo canes and commenced to strike right and left at the ortolans. At each blow two or three of the birds fell to the ground, and my wife and Frank had enough to do to pick them up and put them into the sacks, which were very soon filled.

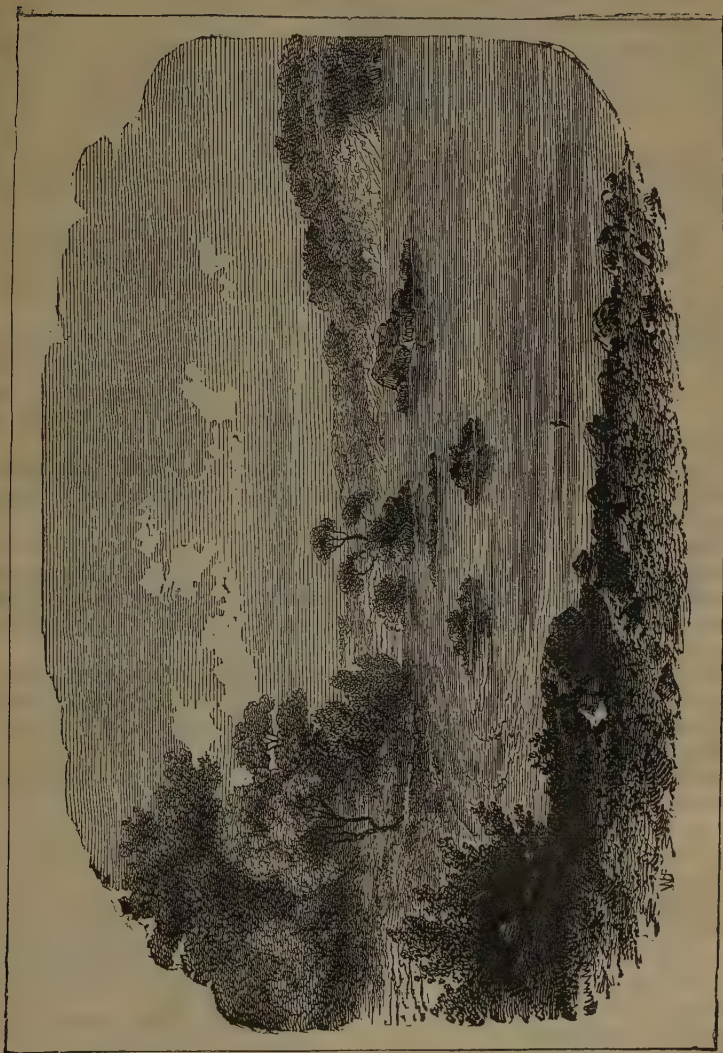
Having secured a sufficient quantity we ceased our butchery, and with the assistance of the torches we made our way back to Falcon's Nest. We placed our sacks on the sticks and carried them between us, relieving each other at intervals, while the others then held the torches in their turn. The freshness of the night having compelled us to wrap something round our heads, our cortège looked something like the procession of the officers of Saint Hermandad carrying out some of the sentences of that terrible tribunal.

We reached Falcon's Nest without adventure, and having put an end to the sufferings of any birds that still lived, we went to bed.

Next day we set about plucking, cleansing, and roasting our game, and the whole day was passed in this occupation, though it was by no means a pleasant one. We set all hands to work, for had I left this business to my wife alone, one half the birds would have been "high" before the other half were preserved. I packed the half-roasted birds in casks, with oil between each layer. When the cask was full, I fastened it down, and stowed it away in a cool spot in our storehouse.

All this had prevented my organizing the expedition against the apes. But that evening, before we slept, we made our arrangements for departure on the following day.

We rose with the dawn. My wife had provided food sufficient for us for several days, in case our expedition lasted longer than we anticipated.



We carried a great quantity of caoutchouc, for it was not by means of gunpowder that we hoped to succeed.

We loaded the buffalo with our tent, our provisions, and various stores. Jack and Ernest sat upon the baggage, I rode the donkey, Fritz mounted the onagra, and we set out, followed by three of the dogs.

After some joking had passed between us as to the appearance of our cavalcade, we began to talk about the campaign we were entering upon.

"My boys," I said, "I have determined to wage a war of extermination against these apes, and that is the reason why I have left your mother and Frank at Falcon's Nest, so as to save them the pain of witnessing an unpleasant sight."

When we had reached the borders of the Lake of Swans, we selected a sheltered spot in which to pitch our tent. We unloaded our cattle, and having "hobbled" them, we permitted them to seek their own food. We also tied up the dogs, and then set out in search of our enemies.

Fritz having gone forward as a scout, returned with the intelligence that he had seen a troop of apes on the borders of the wood at some distance from the farm, in a field of rice.

We hurried on to the farm, so as to prepare our traps before the enemy got scent of us. The aspect of the ruins did not make me any the less anxious to get rid of the workers of such wanton mischief, who appeared to take a malicious pleasure in destroying in a few moments what it had cost us days to construct.

We immediately made our dispositions. We had already cut a number of small posts at Falcon's Nest. These we planted two and two all around the farm, but not very deeply, and made a species of trellis-work of flexible lianas.

We constructed a sort of labyrinth, having passages so very narrow that one could not thread it without touching the sides as he proceeded. At intervals along this maze we placed cocoa-nuts broken in a most tempting manner, and some small gourds filled with rice, maize, and palm wine.

We also planted small artificial thickets of prickly acacias, to which we attached a number of fir-cones. We took care to cover all these branches with a thick coating of our bird-lime, and we also smeared the roof of the farm, etc., with the same glutinous compound, so that any creature that came in contact with any of these things would of necessity be stuck fast.

The boys asked permission to smear some of the neighbouring trees also with the bird-lime. To this I consented, and I pointed out a

particular palm-tree, which bore a species of small nut, and the trunk of which I recommended him to pierce to extract the liquor.

Jack acquitted himself of this commission with his usual address. He climbed up to the top, whence he let fall a ball of cord by means of which we were enabled to send him up the bird-lime and the calabashes. He sent us down in return a bottle filled with the liquid, which was at once sweet and strong, and is known as palm-wine.

As soon as the monkeys left the little wood they made their way towards the farm. Nothing could be more amusing than the sight of the grimaces and antics of the band. Some came on all-fours, some



on their hind feet, the youngest of the troop came playing antics, jumping from tree to tree, chasing each other along the branches, and all the while uttering the most discordant cries. We did not attempt to move for fear of alarming them. They did not wait to enter the labyrinth; they jumped at once upon the roof of the farm-house and fought for the fir-cones and the rice and cocoa-nuts. My hopes were more than realized. In a few moments a most amusing drama was acted before our eyes. There was not one of the troop which had not his legs, paws, or back attached to some glutinous substance and caught in half a dozen different ways at once. When they perceived that all their efforts

to free themselves were unavailing, their lamentations were terrible to hear. Some, while endeavouring to free others, only got more and more entangled themselves. Some attributing to their companions the misfortunes that surrounded them, passed from ill temper to rage, and began to fight and tear each other with desperate energy. The most peaceable, worn out by their attempts to free themselves, rolled on the roof exhausted. But those which presented the most comical appearance were they which had seized upon the pine-cones or the cocoa-nuts, and now found it impossible to get rid of them or to proceed. I saw two of these gourmands fixed to the same gourd of which they both wished to obtain possession. It may easily be imagined that their united efforts to free themselves did not tend to that result, and they gradually got exceedingly disgusted and angry, threatening each other with terrible grimaces and hideous contortions. Another monkey, noticing a cocoa-nut filled with palm wine, pressed down to drink it, and so tightly did he dip his face into it that he glued it to his features and there it remained.

Many monkeys were firmly fastened to the acacias, and tore themselves till the blood flowed in their efforts to detach each other.

When the disorder was at its height and every ape was endeavouring to seek safety in flight, if possible, I let loose the dogs upon the poor creatures. The dogs charged them with terrible fury, and the slaughter was tremendous. A great number of the wounded were already dying upon the ground when my sons and I arrived to put them out of their pain. The poor monkeys, held prisoners on all sides and quite unable to defend themselves, uttered the most agonizing cries, and rolled to our feet as if asking for quarter. I put an end to their sufferings as quickly as possible, for necessity has no law, and forced us to kill them, so we did not cease till we had despatched them all. The whole field presented as repelling an aspect as a field of battle. The silence of death had taken the place of the groans and cries of grief and rage. My children, fairly frightened, turned away with horror from the spectacle, and Fritz exclaimed,—

“Let us hope that we may never again be obliged to take part in such a fearful butchery—it is too cruel!”

“I agree with you,” I said, “that it is cruel; but let us hope that those which have escaped will remember the scene, and that we shall not again be obliged to resort to such measures. The massacre which we pursued for two days upon the flocks of ortolans is not less frightful, and none of you exclaimed against it.”

Fritz replied that each ape that he had killed cried and gesticulated so much like a man that he could almost have believed he was murdering a human being.

I replied, and said that our imagination under certain circumstances contributed not a little to affect our sentiment. We trod upon wasps and flies without any compunction, and killed numbers of birds and animals without it affecting us in the least; but the death of these monkeys, which by their appearance and gestures reminded us of our own species, alarmed and affected us very much; in fact, to see all their bodies stretched upon the ground, one could almost have believed that we stood on a field of battle. It was a reflection of the horrors of war.

I sought to turn the attention of my boys from these sad thoughts, and made them set about some necessary work. We disengaged our dogs, which had managed to get themselves entangled in the bird-limed bushes, and then began to dig a large ditch about three feet deep in the soft and damp soil by the river's bank. In this grave we buried the bodies of the monkeys. When we had filled in the earth again, and inclosed it with a palisade to prevent wild animals from approaching it, we proposed to return to the farm.

While Jack and Ernest were leading out their steeds, I went with Fritz to examine the bird-lime which we had placed in the neighbouring palm-trees. Suddenly three beautiful birds, whose feet had become entangled in the glue, fell close by us, their efforts to escape having no doubt accelerated their fall. The thick grass into which they fell prevented their receiving any harm. We immediately cleansed them from the bird-lime, but tied their legs and wings so as to prevent their escape, while we examined them at our leisure.

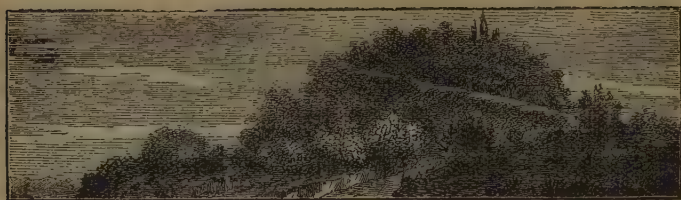
"I scarcely think that these can be pigeons, for here is one that is almost as large as a guinea fowl," said Fritz.

"Now I examine it more attentively," I said, "it appears to me more like a Molucca pigeon, the beauty and size of which often causes it to be mistaken for a pheasant; and it is sometimes found in the dove-cotes of some of the richest pigeon-fanciers in Europe. It is extremely fond of nutmegs, and in the desert it eats as many as it can—it does not digest them. It devours the nutmeg as it does the mistletoe berries, whole."

"But look here," cried Ernest, "what sort of a bird is this?" one?"

"Its plumage is very varied," said Jack, "from whatever side you look at it, it appears another colour. The upper part of its body is a reddish blue shading off into yellow and green, the under part is brown, while its head and throat are the most beautiful deep blue; but what is not less curious is the appearance of the long feathers on the neck which are something like those of the domestic cock."

"These indications," I replied, "make me think it is a Nicobar pigeon."



CHAPTER XXXII.

The Dove-cote.—Pigeon-charming.—The Prediction Fulfilled.—The Magician tells the Secret.—Pigeon-fancying.



NOTHING disturbed us during the night, and the next day after a hurried breakfast we returned to Falcon's Nest, where we were received with every demonstration of affection. However, my wife and little Frank reproached us a little for the length of our absence; but we were very soon pardoned when we showed them the beautiful birds we had brought back, and told them of our success.

My wife highly approved my project of the dove-cote, and we agreed that we should go and spend some time at our grotto at Zeltheim, where we wished to do some other work. So we loaded the cart with provisions and with what implements we required, and set out.

As soon as we had arrived there, I selected a suitable place for the dove-cote, and decided to make it in the rock above the large room in which we intended to store our books. We set about it the very next day, and worked hard at it for some weeks. We found it necessary first to detach a thick layer of the rock salt, and then the rock itself when we reached it; but this did not give us very much trouble, as it was perforated in several places. We afterwards fixed up transverse beams, one extremity of which extended over the passage, and the other was fixed into the hole at the face of the rock. Over this I placed planks, and covered the interior with a coating of plaster to keep the damp out. I fixed perches both within and without, and made nests, a door, and windows. I glazed two of them with isinglass, the third, which occupied the centre, I fixed up with a trap-door which opened and shut by means of a string and a counterpoise.

This erection being finished and ready to receive our pigeons, both domestic and foreign, I said to Fritz one day when we were alone

together, "Now, my boy, it is necessary to decide upon some means by which we can induce the strange pigeons to remain in the dove-cot we have made, and to oblige them to make friends with their companions."

"Well, then, father," he replied, "you must have recourse to some sorcery to do that."

"No sorcery," I replied, "for I depend upon your assistance to carry



out my idea, and that will prove to you that I am only making use of legitimate means."

"I am ready to do anything you tell me," he replied; "and I am very anxious to know how I can assist you."

"I am going to put in practice an idea which I picked up from a pigeon-fancier in our village. My project consists in making a cake of powdered anise, loam, and salt, and offering it to the pigeons we wish

to retain in any new dove-cote. They are so very fond of the smell of the anise plant that they will come back of their own accord to roost, so it will not be very difficult, as we have by a fortunate chance discovered the anise."

"But ought we not to rub a little of the oil on the perches and on the trap?"

"We can easily prepare this oil ourselves by pounding the anise and mixing it with ordinary oil. But why do you think we ought to rub the perches with it?"

"Because the pigeons when going backwards and forwards will smear their wings with the oil, the smell of which will induce other pigeons to follow them."

"I approve of your suggestion of making the oil, and we will immediately put it in practice."

So we commenced to pound the anise in a mortar, and mix some of it in oil, and the rest with loam and salt; we dried by the fire the cake we made of these materials, so that the oil might permeate it better. I placed this cake in the centre of the dove-cote, in which I introduced the pigeons, which up to this time had been kept close prisoners in baskets.

When my other sons returned we were able to announce to them that the pigeons had taken possession of their new abode. They immediately ran up the ladder we had fixed and looked through the opening over the door. We saw with pleasure that the pigeons seemed quite at home, and were flying from perch to perch without exhibiting the least surprise, and picking at the anise cake. They did not appear in any way alarmed even when we approached quite close to them.

So two days passed away. At the end of that time, being curious to know what was the effect of our magic, I awoke Fritz on the third morning and made him go and rub the anise oil on the perches and door of the dove-cote. We afterwards returned to awake my wife and the other children who were still asleep.

After breakfast I announced that I was going to set the pigeons free. So the children came out and stood at the door; while I, assuming a mysterious air, commenced to mutter some unintelligible words, and to trace some magic circles in the air with a stick. At a sign from me, Jack opened the trap-door. We very soon saw the pigeons approaching the opening. They at first put their heads out timidly, and hopped hesitatingly upon the exterior perches, they then suddenly took to flight, and in a very short time were out of sight. My wife and children vainly sought the fugitives, but could catch no glimpse of them, and believed them lost.

But it appeared as if the pigeons had only wished to get a bird's eye

view of the scene from the high regions, for they descended almost immediately and re-entered the dove-cote.

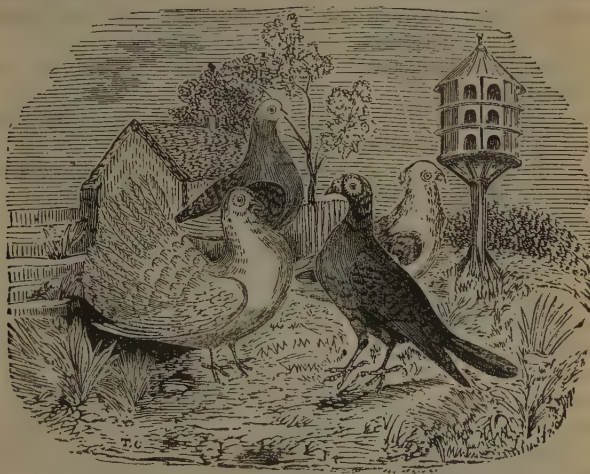
I took advantage of this, and said in a most serious tone, "I knew very well that they would return."

"How could you possibly tell that?" said Ernest.

"Because I have bound them to their dove-cote by my enchantment," I replied.

"By your enchantment!" replied Jack; "you must be a magician, then."

"You silly fellow!" exclaimed Ernest; "there are no such things as magicians now."



"Certainly there are, you incredulous youth," said Fritz; "and you will very soon see such astonishing things that you will be forced to believe it."

"Will you tell me what magic is, papa?" said Frank.

I had no time to reply just then, for the pigeons engrossed all our attention. The three strangers, deserting their European brethren, once more took flight, and wheeling several times around the rock flew away in the direction of Falcon's Nest so rapidly that they were very quickly lost to sight.

"Good-bye gentlemen," exclaimed Jack, taking off his hat and making a comical bow. "Good-bye; *bon voyage*."

"Well," continued Ernest, smiling, "I wonder what has become of all these charms; papa is only making game of us."

My wife and Frank very much regretted the loss of "those beautiful birds."

Fritz muttered, "This is a bad beginning;" but I did not allow myself to be affected by this sudden desertion. I retained my self-possession and kept my countenance. I still assumed the character of the magician, and appearing to address myself to some aerial spirit, I said, half-aloud, "Go, fetch me back those deserters at once."

I then turned to my sons and said, "Now that I am not occupied with the strange birds, let us see what our compatriots are about."

But they seemed already tamed, and contented themselves by flying around us, and occasionally alighting to pick up some seed.

"At any rate, these remain with us," said Jack; "they do not like to leave a good house and plenty of food, although the others prefer their liberty."

"Didn't you hear father tell the familiar spirit to bring back the others?" said Fritz.

"Familiar spirit, indeed!" replied Ernest, shrugging his shoulders; "you are not going to make a fool of me like that."

"Very well, but do not be too hasty in your judgment," I replied; "the result will prove the master hand. We shall see if my magic power does not triumph."

The absence of our pigeons occupied our thoughts during the whole day. Almost every moment we kept looking up in the expectation of seeing the fugitives returning, and we felt it quite impossible to proceed with any work which could not be done within view of the dove-cote. From time to time one of the boys went to the glazed windows to ascertain whether or not the strangers had returned.

Notwithstanding all the jokes and jeers of my family, I remained imperturbable and would not give up the pigeons for lost. As night approached, all the boys, with the exception of Fritz, began to despair; we supped in sadness, and went to bed.

At daybreak we resumed our ordinary occupations, and with common consent forbore to speak upon the subject which occupied our minds. We were working at the interior of the grotto, when towards mid-day, Jack went out for a moment and returned clapping his hands joyfully, jumping about and exclaiming, "It has come back; it has come back."

We immediately inquired what had come back.

"The blue pigeon—the blue pigeon, of course," replied Jack.

"Stuff and nonsense!" exclaimed Ernest; "I bet that he is only doing this to take us all in."

"I knew quite well," I said, "that it would come back; and I will bet you, if you like, that the other two are at this moment on their way home."

"But has it brought back a mate with it?" asked Fritz.

"I don't know," replied Jack, "for I did not take particular notice, I was too anxious to tell you the good news."

We all hurried out of the grotto, and perceived not only our own blue pigeon upon one of the exterior perches of the dove-cote, but also a mate with him to which he was paying great attention, billing and



cooing, and endeavouring to induce her to enter. He put his head in, and came out afterwards to his mate to invite her also, and at length she yielded to his solicitations and installed herself comfortably inside.

The boys immediately wished to shut them up so as to make sure of them, but I dissuaded them, saying that they would only frighten the pigeons by so doing; and besides, I wished the door left open to await the return of the others in the evening.

While we were chatting and joking like this, Fritz, who was always on the alert, suddenly cried out, "Here they are ; here they are !"

And in a few seconds we saw the other pigeon and his mate perch upon the dove-cote. The boys made such a noise that I was obliged to impose silence upon them, for fear that the uproar might frighten the new arrivals and cause them to take flight once for all. But the travelers appeared tired, and the female bird after some little hesitation made up her mind to follow the "gentleman" into the dove-cote.



"Well, Ernest," I said, "what do you think now? You see the second pair have returned."

"I am certainly astonished," replied he ; "it is most certainly a very wonderful thing, but all the same, I do not believe in sorcery."

"I am delighted," I replied, "to see you so firm on this point ; but if the third pair of pigeons come back to-day, will you say it is merely chance ?"

Ernest maintained a discreet silence. We dined, and afterwards returned to our several occupations in the interior of the grotto. After

the usual time had elapsed, my wife and Frank went out to prepare supper. Suddenly the young cook came towards us with a grave expression on his face, and like a herald of old he announced composedly,—

"My Lords," said he, "I have the honour to inform you that my mother, the Queen of these regions, has just beheld the great Nutmeg-eater and his wife arrive, and they have alighted at that pretty hotel which you have built."

"We thank you, Sir Herald," I replied, "for your good news."

We returned hastily to the dove-cote, and it certainly was very curious to observe the invitations that the two lately arrived couples which come back had extended to the last pair outside. The latest arrivals did not remain long insensible to the influence, and soon entered in their turn.

"I confess I am vanquished," said Ernest; "I cannot understand it. But tell me, father, how did you do it?"

"So you have not discovered my conjuring and magic after all," I said.

"Oh, as to that I am quite at a loss," he replied; "and I am your very humble, but very ignorant, servant."

"Well," I said, "ask Fritz, he will tell you how the affair has been managed."

For some time we only occupied ourselves with our pigeon-colony and in making their house more inhabitable. We noticed with pleasure that the latest occupants had made themselves very comfortable, and were already building their nests. Amongst the materials which they used for this purpose I remarked a species of grey moss which came from the old trees in long threads. I recognised this as the tillanty, which is used in the West Indies instead of horsehair to stuff mattresses. And indeed it possesses such solidity, combined with flexibility, that it is treated as hemp in Europe. The Spanish races of South America make rope of it of such lightness that a length of twenty feet attached to a tree will float out on the breeze like a flag.

I imparted this discovery to my wife, who was much pleased; for as a good housekeeper she immediately began to consider the advantages which could be obtained from it in the household arrangements.

From time to time we found the nutmegs in the dove-cote. We washed them carefully and sowed them in the ground, in the hope that at some distant day the plantation thus raised might be a source of great profit.





CHAPTER XXXIII.

More about the Pigeons.—Jack's Adventure.—Saved by a Jackal.—The Onagra's Foal.—Approach of the Rainy Season.—Getting our House ready.—The Forges.—Our Library and Studies.



IN the midst of all our occupations the pigeons still attracted a good deal of our attention during several weeks.

The three pairs of indigenous pigeons began to accustom themselves to their new habitation more and more; but the number of European pigeons increased enormously, by the increase of their families, and also by the immigrations from Falcon's Nest, which we began at length to fear would oust the strangers altogether.

To obviate this, and in order that we might not find ourselves short of grain in the rainy season, we set traps for the new comers by placing bird-lime around the dove-cote every morning before we opened it. This process furnished us with excellent food, and gave a rest to Fritz's eagle. Thus we reduced the number of the inhabitants of the dove-cote to eight pairs, all of which were occupied in sitting and in building their nests.

Just about this time an incident, comical enough in its result, but which might have had very serious consequences, of which Jack was the hero, and very nearly the victim, brought a little diversion into the monotony of our lives.

One morning Jack returned home covered from head to foot with a black and greenish mud, and presenting a most pitiable appearance.

The poor boy was ready to cry when his brothers began to quiz him on his appearance; but I put a stop to their teasing, and inquired where he had managed to get himself into such a mess.

"Behind the rocks in the Flamingo Marsh," he replied in a most lamentable tone.

"But what were you about there? You are not a flamingo, are you?"

"I went to get some reeds to make coops for the pigeons," he said.

"Your intention was excellent," I said, "and you deserve more praise than blame. And how is it you did not succeed?"

"I did succeed," he replied. "I have brought back some bundles of reeds."

"They are as muddy as you are, my poor boy. We can scarcely



make any use of them in that condition. But tell us how you managed to get into such a plight."

"I wanted to choose some long, straight reeds, which I saw only in the centre of the marsh. I therefore jumped from tuft to tuft; but at last my foot slipped, and I fell into the marsh, in which I was gradually becoming engulfed. The more I struggled to gain the bank the more I became immersed. I cried at the top of my voice, but no one came to my assistance; so I began to think I had better endeavour to extri-

cate myself. Now do you know what I did, papa? I cut away all the reeds I could reach, and placed them underneath my arms in a kind of fascine, on which I managed to support myself on my chest while I disengaged my legs. By a vigorous effort I succeeded in clambering up upon the bed of reeds, and thus sustained myself above the marsh, where I should probably have remained to this day if it had not been for the assistance of my jackal."

"How did that happen?" inquired Ernest.

"Very easily. Although I was now near the edge of the marsh, I did not know how to get out of it, for I was afraid of sinking again if I put my feet down. All this time my brave jackal was running to and fro in a most anxious state upon the bank; and though he saw very well that I could not clamber up, the good old fellow appeared to be encouraging me. When I called him he came immediately. I extended my arms and seized him by the tail. Then I cried out as loudly as I could, which alarmed him. He wished to escape. He pulled and struggled, and in a short time he dragged me ashore. That is the state of the case."

Although the lad had really been in very considerable danger, we could not help laughing at his adventure, and above all, at the very singular manner in which he had been extricated. All the while we did not omit to congratulate him on the presence of mind he had displayed under the circumstances. His mother, who did not appreciate the "fun" of the adventure, made him hasten away to change his clothes and wash himself.

Subsequently I did make use of some of the reeds which Jack had brought back, to make the weaving utensils which my wife had a long time been wishing for. Two reeds split lengthways supplied me with four switches, which served for the two combs. I afterwards made the boys cut some smaller pieces of wood to serve as teeth; and now that I possessed some of the precious materials, I put them in a safe place without telling any one for what purpose I had put them aside, for I intended them as a surprise.

About this time the onagra made us a present of a little foal of her species. We were delighted to see our herds increase in this manner, and by the addition of such an animal, which promised to become a very valuable "mount." It was allotted to me unanimously. I made up my mind to train it, and called it "Swift," a name which it fully merited by the speed and elegance of its movements.

On the following day we commenced to cut and dry a supply of grass for winter food for the cattle. We also accustomed the animals to return home at the sound of a wooden horn, taking care to reward them on the first occasions with some little tasty morsel, some salt or rice,

The pigs alone declined to pay any attention to the signal, for they found abundant supplies of food away from home, and of a kind more to their taste than what we could give them. So we allowed them their liberty, for we were sure of recovering them at any time by sending the dogs after them.

There was one thing needful, and that was a spring or reservoir of fresh water near our grotto; for, as it was, we were obliged to fetch our supplies from the Jackal River. This would be too great a distance to traverse during the rainy season, so I set about to obviate this drawback before the wet weather set in. I therefore determined to construct an aqueduct, and we lost no time in setting to work. A number of bamboos fastened one within the other in lengths served for pipes, and a large cask acted as a reservoir. We intended to improve upon this rough arrangement in the future; but, imperfect as it was, it answered our present needs, and my wife assured me it was just as good as a marble basin surrounded by dolphins and other animals discharging the water from shells or other marine objects.

Meanwhile, the rainy season was rapidly approaching. Not wishing to be surprised in the middle of our work by the winter, we took advantage of the fine weather that remained to us, and worked hard to get our stores in before the wet weather commenced. We stored away a good supply of potatoes, rice, guavas, etc.; and, as we had done the previous year, we sowed corn and other grain in the hope that the rainy season would cause them to shoot up quickly.

My wife was good enough to make some sacks, which we filled with corn, and we made use of the tubs which had composed our former raft to store away our vegetables and dried fruits.

While we were thus employed I noticed with regret that our former mode of cultivation could not be long continued, as the different sorts of grain did not all ripen at the same time. Our fields were a long way from our dwelling-place, and we could not watch their progress; and we either arrived too soon or too late to gather the harvest. To obviate this inconvenience I determined to make a general sowing the next year in a large field prepared for the purpose. Having already procured from the ship all the necessary agricultural implements for farming in proper style, it only remained for me to train the buffalo and the young bull to work in double harness together during the winter months, when we should be forced to keep in doors.

And now the temperature became very variable. During the last few days we had had several showers. Clouds were beginning to collect on the horizon, and squalls were frequent. The sea also commenced to join in the gradual change in nature's appearance, and was frequently extremely rough, dashing high up on the sands and rocks.

So we hurried on to render our house habitable.

There was one very great drawback to remedy—the want of daylight in the grotto. It had only four openings, including the door: one in the kitchen, one over the work-room, and another in our bed-chamber. The children's rooms and all the rest of the grotto were plunged in darkness.

Openings had been pierced in the partitions and closed by window sashes, or thin curtains; but only a very feeble light penetrated by the door and windows, so that these openings between the rooms did not add much to the lucidity of the apartments. But pending the return of the fine weather I proposed to remedy this defect and to put in practice a plan I had formed for the proper lighting of the house.

There still was left one immense bamboo of those which we had used in the construction of the dwelling. This bamboo, when fixed in the ground, touched the top of our grotto, and was supported by “stays.” Calling Jack to my assistance, I made use of his ever-ready activity, and bade him climb to the top of this singular mast, to which I had attached a rope ladder. Armed with a pulley and a hammer, he ascended in a moment, and following my instructions, fixed his pulley in the rock and through it passed a rope. He then descended in safety on to a mattress I had placed beneath for fear of accident. To the cord he had run through the pulley I attached a large lantern which we had brought from the wreck, and inside this lantern my wife had fixed a strong lamp. By these means we managed to light up the grotto very well.

We next set about putting things in their places. Ernest and Frank fastened shelves in the walls of their rooms to receive their books. My wife and Jack arranged the kitchen, and I with Fritz's assistance put the workshop to rights, a proceeding which demanded more bodily strength than the other arrangements did.

In this apartment we first set up the splendid turning lathe which we had found in the cabin of the ship. We also put up a forge in masonry, to which I fitted a large bellows. We placed the two anvils on blocks, and hung on the walls all the tools and implements we should most likely require in forging. In front of the forge I established the joiners' benches, etc., and for many days we were scarcely without saw or hammer in our hands.

Ernest and Frank meantime had arranged our little library, and I was astonished at the number of books we possessed. Besides those which had belonged to me individually, we had found many in the chests of the captain and officers of the ship. There were some of all sorts,—religious books, treatises on navigation and seamanship, travels, natural history, principally on botany and zoology, with many engravings. One evening when we were turning over these last named,

we found out that the "monkey root" brought back by Fritz and Jack on one of their excursions, was really the ginseng of the Chinese. But what gave me very great pleasure was the possession of maps, a terrestrial globe, and many mathematical and astronomical instruments. We also discovered amongst our literary and scientific possessions some grammars, and vocabularies of foreign languages, of which I hoped to make good use.



With the exception of Frank and Jack we all knew French very well, a language commonly spoken in Switzerland. Fritz and Ernest, during our stay in England, had picked up a little English. I now induced them to make this language a serious study; for English is so universally spoken at sea, and outside the European continent, that it would be difficult in the present day to meet a ship on board which no

one could speak or understand it. My wife had some knowledge of Dutch which she had picked up at the Cape of Good Hope, where we had some connections in a Dutch family. Jack set himself to study Italian and Spanish, which pleased him by their rhythm and melody. We all occupied ourselves with German and French, the study of English and Dutch devolved more particularly on my wife, Fritz, and Ernest. The last named, who had already commenced to learn Latin in Switzerland, now renewed his study of it, in order to be able to read the medical books written in that language which we had in our library. As for myself, I began to study Malay; for on examining our maps I had come to the conclusion that our island was a part of the Indian archipelago, and consequently the Malaysian language would be very useful if any of the natives should discover us.

In this final arrangement of our habitation, we obtained a quantity of things from the bottom of the ship's chests; we were now lodged like princes, and our children kept tormenting me to change the name of our grotto. In their vanity they wished to call it, the Palace in the Rock. After some discussion we decided to call it simply Felsenheim, or the House in the Rock.





CHAPTER XXXIV.

End of the Rainy Season.—The Stranded Whale. —The Coral.—Something about Whales.—Cutting up the Whale.



OWARDS the end of August, when we were expecting the rainy season to end, the bad weather set in with redoubled fury. The sea was terribly rough, the thunder roared, lightning flashed, the tempest howled, and all nature threatened us with death. Oh how happy we felt to be so comfortably sheltered in our solid habitation in the midst of all this commotion. What our lot would have been in our aërial dwelling at Falcon's Nest we trembled to think.

But by degrees the clouds dispersed, and the tempest subsided.

The rain having ceased, we took advantage of the first rays of sunlight to go out and see what damage had been done.

We perceived with surprise signs of vegetation which contrasted strongly with so many traces of destruction. As we were walking along the rocks which extended close to the sea, Fritz, who had very sharp sight and extraordinary powers of observation, discovered an elevated peak on a little sandy island, a round object of great size, which looked like a large boat bottom upwards. I brought my telescope to bear upon the object, but I could not make out what it could be.

The long seclusion to which we had been condemned made us very anxious to put out to the little island to find out what the object was, and immediately we set out to unmoor the canoe; and having baled the water out we rigged it up as quickly as possible, and next morning, very early, I set out with Ernest, Fritz and Jack.

As we advanced we made many and frequent guesses at the object we sought. Fritz would not give up the idea of the boat, Jack fancied it was the trunk of a tree, Ernest thought it was a sea lion of which he had read. I made up my mind that it was a stranded whale, and when

we reached the little island I perceived that I was right, and immediately began to think of the best means of obtaining the oil from it. Prudence warned me to avoid any collision between our frail bark and the stranded monster. I carefully steered the canoe between the island and the coast, and we landed on a small strip of sand in a little creek.

The little island was only a very few inches above the surface of the water, and could be crossed in ten or twelve minutes, but one could have doubled its extent with a little toil and perseverance. The vegetation was luxuriant, the plants with which it was covered being strong and vigorous. A number of sea-birds had made their nests upon it, and the boys filled their pockets with eggs to carry home to their mother and Frank.

There were two ways by which we could reach the whale. One direct but troublesome, the other more circuitous but much easier. I chose the former, leaving the other to my children; and when I arrived at the crest of the rock, I was enabled to overlook the island and the neighbouring coast.

In the distance I could see Falcon's Nest and Zeltheim with a large extent of sea. On one side was our present and future existence, as it were; on the other our past: our lost native land,—the infinite, the impossible. Thoughts at once pleasant and sad took possession of my mind as I looked around me, and I should have given way to them had not the sight of the whale at my feet recalled me to the object of my expedition. I hurried on, and arrived at the same time as the boys, who had followed the coast line. They showed me their hats full of coral and shells which they had picked up, respecting which they asked a great many questions. I answered them to the best of my ability, and what I told them of these strange works of nature so occupied them that they nearly forgot all about the whale. And now as it was getting late, and besides, as we had not the necessary weapons to despatch the monster, I put off the business till the next day, and we took our way back to the main land.

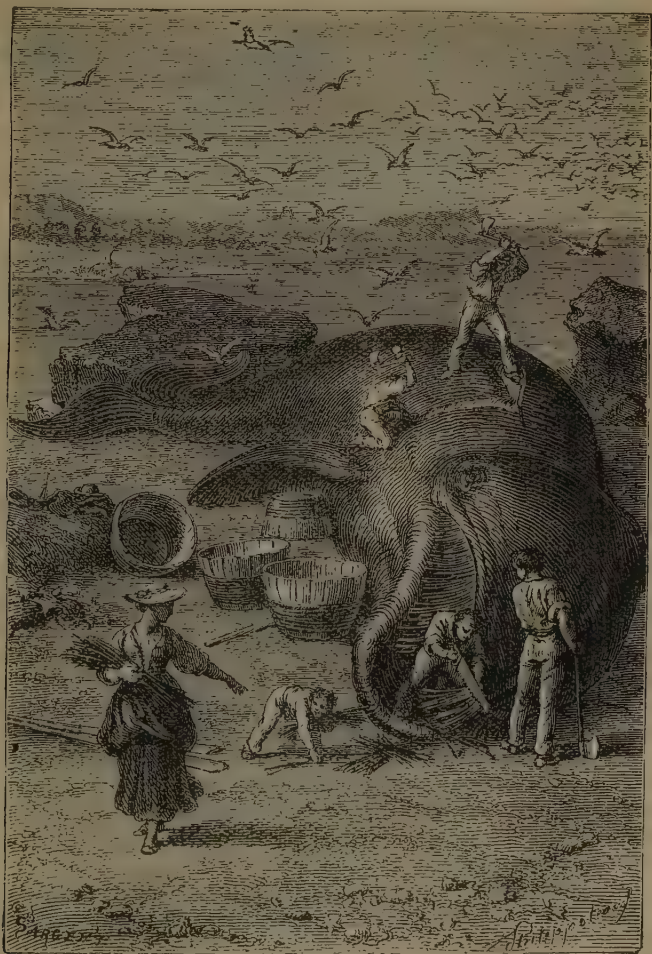
My young sons who began to find rowing somewhat troublesome, asked me if I could not invent some means by which the canoe could be propelled without oars.

I could not help smiling at the unlimited confidence they appeared to have in my resources.

"I am not a sorcerer," I said, "and I have no fairy to assist me; but nevertheless, if you will find me a large iron wheel I will make an attempt."

"An iron wheel," exclaimed Fritz, "there is a very large one indeed on our turning lathe."

I did not wish to say more at that time, and without promising anything definite, I encouraged them to resume their struggle with the waves.



We arrived at last on the shore, where we found my wife awaiting us. She was delighted with the beauty of the coral which my son showed

her ; and when I told her the plan I had formed to return to the island the next day to despatch the whale, she begged to accompany us. I consented with pleasure.

The following day I put on board the boat the necessary tools and some food, and immediately after dinner, which we hurried over more than usual, we prepared for our novel expedition. I was somewhat embarrassed to find some casks in which to store the oil which I hoped to get from the whale. I did not wish to take the tubs which were in daily use, as the smell of the oil would not be easily removed ; nevertheless I particularly desired this whale oil, because I wished to trim our lanterns with it, so that we might be able in case of any attack to retire to the end of the grotto and observe our enemy with greater ease.

My wife reminded me of the tubs we used in our first boat, four of which were in sufficiently good condition for our purpose. We hastened to fasten them together, and then took them in tow of our canoe, and after we had provided ourselves with hatchets, knives, and spikes for our boots, we put off to the island.

As our boat was heavily laden our course was slow and difficult, and our rowers grumbled more than once. However, the sea being calm we reached the island without accident, and this time landed close beside the whale.

After we had placed the canoe and tubs in safety we examined the enormous animal more closely, and I was satisfied by the appearance of its back, by its fins and black tail, that it was a Greenland whale. At the sight of this colossal cetacean my wife could not restrain her astonishment, and little Frank was so frightened that he hid himself. The rest of us, however, bravely approached the monster and endeavoured to arrive at an approximate estimate of its bulk. I fancied that he must be at least about seventy feet long and about thirty feet wide, which was not much more than half the size that whales sometimes attain.

But what struck us all most particularly was the enormous size of its head and the smallness of its eyes, which were not larger than those of an ox. His jaws were about ten feet long and garnished with black and flexible bones which are known in trade under the name of whalebone.

Another circumstance which astonished my family equally was the smallness of its throat, which would not admit the passage of any object larger than my arm.

Fritz and Jack with their crampons on their feet climbed on the whale's back, and cutting away at its head with hatchets and knives, removed the upper jaw and began to detach the whalebone, in which I assisted them to the utmost of my power. We counted many hundreds of these fins, but we only took about a hundred of the best. My wife and little Frank were charged with the duty of placing them in the

canoe, while Ernest cut out from the flanks of the animal two immense pieces of blubber about three feet thick.

Suddenly a whole flock of birds arrived to dispute possession of the prey. They first flew round us, but as their numbers increased they got bolder, and very soon snatched pieces of flesh from our hand, and from under our hatchets, so to speak. It then became a matter of dis-



cussion who would carry away the flesh—the feathered bipeds or the others; so to disembarass ourselves of this audacious crowd we killed a few. Frank immediately picked them up and carried them to his mother, who appeared very glad of their down.

I left Fritz to look after the whalebone, and I set about cutting a long strip of skin from the head to the tail of the animal, which I intended to utilize as harness for our steeds and as soles for our shoes, but I was not sure whether the skin was not too thick. Nevertheless I cut

it away in the hope that in drying the hide would become thinner. Our canoe began to get filled up; we would have wished to continue our work but for the approach of evening which obliged me to give the signal for departure.

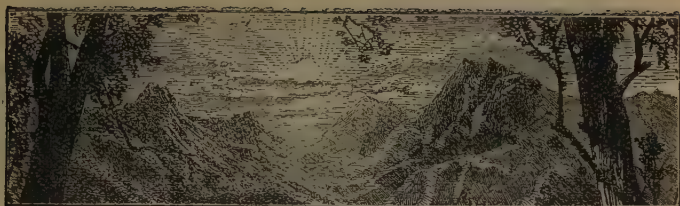
Before quitting the spot I cut away a portion of the whale's tongue, which I understood was good to eat. We shoved off with our rich cargo, the transport of which incommoded us extremely; the odour which exhaled from the tubs poisoned the air around, and my little rowers, anxious to escape from the smell by which they were almost suffocated, redoubled their efforts. I endeavoured to reanimate their courage by reminding them of all the advantages we should derive from our booty. At length after a successful trip we arrived at Felsenheim. The donkey, the cow, the buffalo, and the onagra served us to transport the tubs full of blubber to the mouth of the stream, when we covered them over with planks kept down by heavy stones so as to confine the smell as much as possible.

The following morning at break of day we put to sea again, but without my wife and little Frank, for I did not wish to expose them to the very unpleasant work which I proposed to do. I had made up my mind to cut into the intestines of the whale and to take out the largest of them to make into bottles; I also wished to extract the nerves of the fins, which would demand a long and careful dissection.

Our canoe impelled by a strong wind very soon carried us across to the little island. We found it completely covered by a crowd of sea-birds which were devouring the carcase of the whale. It was not until we had been half-deafened by their cries, and after a battle royal in which we killed a number of them, that they made way for us.

Before commencing we took off a greater part of our clothing, and then set about our troublesome work. I will spare my readers the description of the necessary dissection. I explained to my children that I wished to make bottles of the long entrails which would serve us to preserve the oil in. I took occasion to explain to them the uses to which the intestines of animals are frequently put, and this conversation served to make us forget in some measure the disagreeable nature of our work which we continued until we had taken from the whale everything we wanted. My wife awaited us on the bank, but this time she did not welcome us as warmly as usual. At the sight of our horrible cargo, which exhaled a very unpleasant smell, she could not hide the displeasure with which she regarded the preparation of the oil,—a disgusting employment, a great part of which would fall on her.

We immediately commenced to tie up the entrails of the whale at each end, and having filled them with air we left them to dry.



CHAPTER XXXV.

Getting the Oil.—A Storehouse proposed upon Whale Island.—Mechanical Paddles.—A way to make a Turtle useful.



EXT day very early we were on foot and very anxious to set about the fabrication of the oil. We had set up our workshop as far as possible from our dwelling, so that those at home might not be affected by the smell of the blubber. I placed the four casks filled with blubber on the sledge, as on a platform, and pierced them near the bottom by a hole about half an inch in diameter. With the aid of large stones placed on each cask we obtained great pressure, which gave us the finest and best portion of the oil. Nevertheless we passed it through fine linen afterwards, and by means of an enormous iron spoon which we had saved from the wreck we poured it into the bottles which had now dried in the sun. The blubber already passed through the first stage we cut into small pieces, and we melted it in an immense saucepan which we had obtained from the wreck. After the liquid had again cooled in the casks we filled our calabashes and remaining bottles with it. However, I took care to put aside two bottles which would be of use in making a skiff something like the kaiaks which the Esquimaux use.

When we thought we had sufficient oil we threw the blubber into the Jackal River, where the ducks and geese regaled themselves heartily on it. My wife having plucked the down from the sea-birds we had brought home, had thrown their bodies also into the water, upon which an enormous quantity of crabs fastened. We caught some hundreds of these fellows, and by so doing we replenished our exhausted preserves of these creatures.

When we had finished the manufacture of the oil and had returned to our ordinary duties, my wife said,—

“What is to prevent our establishing a storehouse on Whale Island?”

we shall then be relieved of the smell which arises from the oil, and also shall be free from the danger we now run of setting fire to the oil. It is really a pity not to make use of this little island, from which we can always see what goes on here. Besides our oil-store we can make a plantation there, and place some of our domestic animals upon it, and have nothing to fear from jackals and monkeys; and as for the sea birds they will very soon abandon it when they find that we occupy it."

This idea pleased me greatly. The children also were delighted, and wished to set sail immediately and commence work upon the island. I was obliged to restrain their ardour and to inculcate patience by reminding them that it was necessary to wait till the wind and the waves, coming to the assistance of birds and insects, should have cleared away the carcase of the whale.

But, I added, to let Jack see that I had not forgotten his troubles in rowing, I would endeavour to replace the heavy oars which we now used by some mechanical apparatus which would be easier to work. So I immediately sent Jack to fetch the two wheels of the turning-spit which we had brought from the vessel. I chose the strongest, and took a square bar of iron which I placed in the centre and across the canoe, so that I could place a footboard on each side. I rounded the bars at the extremities, and for fear that the friction should damage the bark of the canoe, I fastened small "fenders" at the ends. I then fixed the wheel upon the bar, and succeeded in giving a certain force of rotation. I afterwards constructed with some pieces of whale's hide two wheels with cross pieces somewhat resembling the sails of a windmill, which I fastened to the exterior ends of the large bar of iron. We then attempted to work the machine. As we turned the crank these sails struck the water, and the canoe was thus impelled. The uniform beating of the wheels, a continuous movement, prevented the oscillation of the boat and gave a greater speed than we had been able to do with the oars. The delight of the boys may be imagined when they saw Fritz and me make a trial of it in Safety Bay. The weather and the water both favoured us, and we went with great speed from one point to the other.

Scarcely had we returned to shore again when the other children jumped into the boat and begged me to let them go as far as Whale Island. I would not consent, as the sun was now setting; but to make up for this refusal I promised them that they should all go the next day to Cape Disappointment, and to the little farm on Prospect Hill to see how the animals were getting on there, and in returning, I added, we will make a halt at Whale Island.

My proposal was received most joyfully, and every one set about making necessary preparations of arms and provisions. We all retired at an early hour.



After having passed Whale Island on our expedition, we approached the coast so as to land opposite Monkey Wood, where we wished to collect some cocoa-nuts and get some young trees. As we penetrated the wood we were delighted to hear the crowing of the cocks in the distance. This recalled my native land, in which the crow of a cock often indicates to the weary traveller his near approach to a resting-place. I sought to hide the emotion produced by this recollection, and



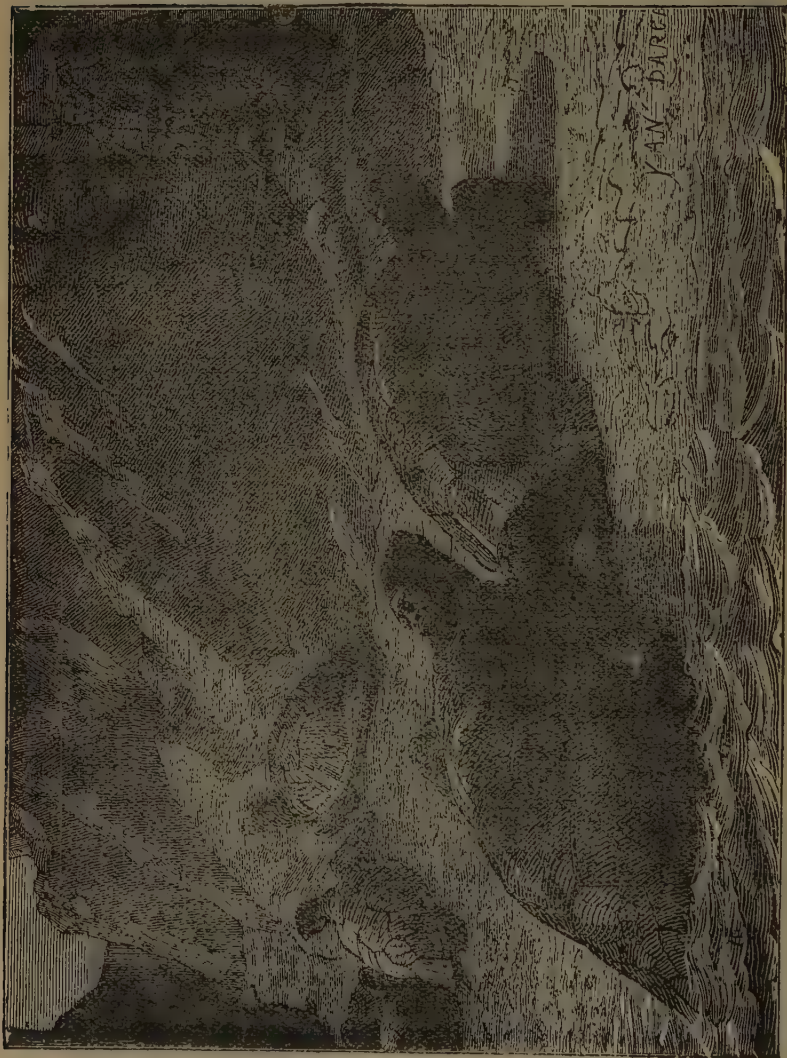
force myself to keep these sad memories from my wife, by speaking of the plantation which we thought of making on Whale Island.

While my boys knocked down and collected the cocoa-nuts, I went alone towards Pine Wood to seek some young plants. As soon as I returned from this excursion we re-embarked and proceeded to Prospect Hill. The nearer we approached it the louder became the cock crowing, the bellowing, and the various cries of our domestic animals.

We disembarked in a creek shaded by mangoe-trees, which I was very glad to find there. This tree grows principally on the borders of the sea, and pushes its roots into the sand, so that the shore is protected from the fury of the waves. It is a very pretty tree besides, and the bark furnishes a material of a resinous nature. All these reasons induced me to select mangoe-trees to border the coast of Whale Island, which I wished not only to preserve from the effects of the sea, but to enlarge as much as possible. We therefore took up many mangoe plants, taking care to wrap their roots in damp moss and fresh leaves. We afterwards clambered up the point of land which led us to our farm. We found everything there in good order. The only thing which struck us was that the goats, sheep, and fowls, the numbers of which had much increased, fled away at our approach. My sons, who had made up their minds for a drink of warm milk, immediately set off in pursuit of the herds, but seeing that all their efforts to overtake the goats were useless, they had recourse to their slings. The fugitives were thus very quickly brought back, and while my wife was milking them the boys fed them with potatoes and salt.



My good wife wishing to take back some chickens with her, threw down some handfuls of grain and rice, and very soon caught a number of them. We found also a quantity of eggs in the farmhouse. The exercise having sharpened our appetites considerably, we sat down to do justice to our cold provisions. My wife carved the *pièce de resistance* namely the whale's tongue, but scarcely had we put a morsel in our mouths than we declared it was detestable, and not fit to eat. So we gave it to the jackal, which devoured it eagerly, while we set about to seek for some bananas, and drank some milk to take away the rancid oily taste which remained in our mouths.



TURTLE.

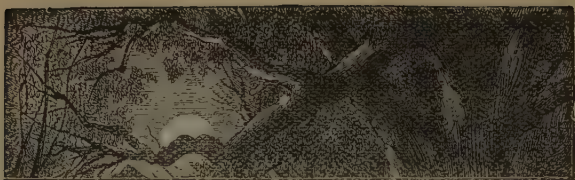
After dinner I went with Fritz to collect some sugar-canes and to cut some slips to transplant on the island.

We descended to the shore laden with our booty. We launched the canoe and put to sea with the intention of doubling Cape Disappointment and exploring the great bay beyond. But on this occasion the cape certainly justified its name, for we soon found ourselves amongst reefs and sandbanks. We might have been stranded here completely had not the flood tide fortunately come to our assistance. We then hoisted our sail to take advantage of a little breeze that sprang up, and we soon found ourselves at the island. During the passage we perceived the outlines of some large animals, which I took for sea-lions or sea-bears. At a distance they appeared like masses of rock, but, as we approached, they assumed their proper shapes, and we beheld two troops of marine monsters contending against each other. This spectacle rather alarmed us, and we hastened away as fast as possible before the enraged animals perceived us, for we were afraid they might unite against us as their common enemy.

Before long we perceived an enormous turtle which Fritz gave us notice of, and requested help. I hastened to his assistance with two stout oars, and arrived only just in time; in a moment or two more the animal would have escaped into the sea. We could not succeed in turning the enormous creature on his back, so I had recourse to another expedient to capture him.

I fastened a cord round a barrel in which we carried our supply of drinking water; one end of this cord I fastened to the bow of the canoe and the other end I passed round the back of the turtle: we afterwards fixed it round his legs, and when we had all re-embarked I pushed the animal into the water. I placed myself at the bow, hatchet in hand, so as to cut the cord if I saw any indication of danger. The cask prevented the turtle from diving; so, forced to remain above water, he began to swim, and towed us along very easily. As soon as I saw that he was not going in the direction we wished to proceed, I struck him with my oar, either on the right or left side, as required, when the animal immediately turned in the proper direction. We reached Safety Bay without any accident, and steered the boat to its usual anchorage, and having released the turtle from the cask, I fastened him with cords to a stake in the sand.

The next morning we killed him, because we feared we should not be able to keep him prisoner. His shell furnished us with a beautiful basin for the water at the entrance of our grotto, while the flesh supplied us with food for many days; and my wife, who had at first declared she could hardly bear to taste it, now confessed that it was the nicest meat she had ever eaten.



CHAPTER XXXVI.

Domestic Employments.—Manufacture of Saddles and Bridles.—The Litter.—Ernest is a Victim to a Joke.—The Boa-Constrictor.—An *Alerte*!

SOME little time after the rainy season I had resolved to prepare a field in which to sow our different sorts of grain, so that in future all our crops should ripen as nearly as possible at the same time, and we should have less trouble to harvest them; but the numerous engagements we had had in the interval had prevented me setting about this work. Our animals had not yet become accustomed to the yoke, nor had the field been entirely cleared; so I resolved to wait for some months longer before commencing the task, and not to sow the seeds until just before the rainy season, so as to insure their coming up. Besides, I wished to make use of the time which remained to construct a loom for my good wife, in the hope of being able to remedy as far as possible the ragged state into which our clothing had fallen. The machine I made was neither perfect, nor easy in its working; but she was able to use it, and I was now very glad that in my young days I had visited weavers' workshops as well as those of other artisans. We still wanted the paste with which weavers rub the threads to prevent them from sticking together; but in default of the necessary farina I made use of isinglass, which answered remarkably well, and perhaps was even better than the paste itself.

Now that I had isinglass prepared, I took the opportunity to attempt once more to make window-glass of a novel description. The children were incredulous as to my success, and made some ironical observations; but I persevered, and replied to them by expressive nods only. I took the finest and most transparent isinglass I could procure, submitted it to a great heat, and allowed nearly all the water to evaporate. Immediately I perceived that it had attained the consistency of honey, I turned it upon the marble tablet of our console table, upon which I had

made a little bed of wax to retain the liquid. As I had previously rubbed oil upon the marble so that the isinglass might not stick to it, I obtained a glassy tablet perfectly polished and transparent, about the thickness of ordinary window-glass, and so soft that I was able to cut it with our large scissors into squares of any size required.

Of course my new glass was not so clear as the crystal, but neither were we princes; and I believe that many a rich ancient Roman did not see so clearly through his Muscovy glass as we through our squares of isinglass. It was even more transparent and less fragile than the horn which was fixed to the lanterns. In a word, we considered it a true masterpiece, and my wife applauded me and rejoiced at the idea that



in the future these panes would remedy much of the inconvenience we had had to put up with hitherto.

I was so much encouraged by these two successes that I attempted a third enterprise, or to speak more poetically, I wished to add another laurel to my crown. My young riders had for a long time been pressing me to make them saddles, bridles, etc., and I wished to satisfy them, if possible. As I had already fashioned the wood for the saddles as well as for the two yokes, I began my task with more confidence. The skins of the kangaroos and the sea-dogs did me excellent service on this occasion, and furnished me with the necessary leather; and for garniture I

took the long fibre of which I have already spoken. I first made two long and thick plaits, which I fastened round the two sticks. I then plunged them into water with a little oil mixed with ashes. This was intended to prevent the fibre from curling up and becoming hard beneath the weight of the rider. It succeeded perfectly; for in proportion as the fibre became soft and flexible it retained force and elasticity, and answered as well as the best horsehair. But I did not confine myself to the manufacture of saddles. I made girths and stirrups and bridles, and my wife saw with pleasure how well the boys seconded my efforts. I used the rest of the hides to make collars and straps, etc., though in my inexperience I had frequently to go and measure the animal for which they were destined.

But I had still more to do before we could make use of the yokes, for it was not easy to make our intractable animals submit to them, and we should never have succeeded if it had not been for the iron rings which we had put through their nostrils. To these rings I attached a short cord, and I had only just to pull this ever so little to overcome their obstinacy and make them obey me. I preferred not to harness them in the Swiss manner, by the neck and horns, but I adopted the Italian method, by the shoulders; in fact, the oxen appeared to me to use their shoulders more than their heads, and at length I saw very well that the animals would do little damage with their horns if by chance they ever got angry.

These occupations kept us very busy for some days, and then we were visited by a great shoal of herrings, as in the preceding year. We took care not to let such an occasion of renewing our provisions pass away from us. Our take was abundant, but was not marked by any incident worth recording.

To the herrings succeeded the sea-dogs, whose hides this time were more valuable to me than before, as I had lately used such a quantity of leather, and there were still a great many things to be made. For instance, my sons had already asked for shabraques and holsters, which were articles more for show than use. However, as the sea-dogs had arrived to place them in our hands, so to speak, we launched our little fleet, and caught twenty or twenty-four of different sizes. We immediately skinned them, and salted and dried the skins, and I need scarcely say that we collected the fat and oil.

The young people had for a long time wished to go on a hunting expedition; but I wished to make an attempt at the art of making baskets, in which my wife could, while we were absent, collect and bring to the house the corn and fruits. So we collected a good store of willow-wands, which grew in abundance on the banks of the Jackal River, for I did not wish to experimentalize with the beautiful reeds which we had

prepared. The result proved us right, for our efforts were so badly formed that they only excited laughter. By degrees, however, we became more skilful ; and if our hampers lacked grace of form, they had, at any rate, the merit of strength and capacity. Two large baskets we found very useful to keep our corn in. They were kept together by solid pieces of wood, and, by means of holes through which a stick could be thrust, they could be carried by two people.

Scarcely had the first of these been made than my boys wished to make a trial of it. Two bamboo canes were passed through it ; Jack



MEXICAN LITTER.

went before, Ernest behind. They both felt capable of carrying any burden, and ran about uttering cries of joy.

But, as often happens, the amusement appeared too simple ; so they seized upon little Frank, and, *nolens volens*, they tossed him into the basket and began to run about with him.

"But, papa," said Fritz at last, "we could make a litter out of this in which mother could be much more easily carried than in the car or upon the donkey, when we go for a long excursion."

Immediately they all cried out, "A litter, oh, yes, papa, a litter."

That will be splendid. It will be so useful when any one is fatigued, or ill, or hurt !”

“That is all very well, boys,” replied my wife ; “but I do not think it would be so very pleasant for me to be seated in a basket from which I could not see around me.”

“Yet in fact,” I said, “the idea is not unreasonable ; but still it will be necessary to make a basket for the purpose of carrying people.”

“Yes,” said Fritz ; “it might be like the palanquins of the Chinese or the Persians.”

“Yes,” added Ernest, “but those are carried on the shoulders of slaves, and such work requires consideration ; those litters are usually suspended on bamboo stakes, or poles, with cords.”

“Make yourself quite easy, my dear Ernest,” replied my wife. “I have no intention of making you either slaves or porters, for I am quite sure you would not be able to lift me from the ground ; but I should have no objection to be carried, if there is any one strong enough to do so.”

“Strong enough !” exclaimed Jack. “Are not the bull and the buffalo sufficiently strong enough on their legs to carry you, mother ?”

“Upon my word,” I replied, “that is not a bad idea of master Jack’s. So, then, we have some excellent palanquin porters ready to hand.”

“How very pleasant you will feel, mother, in the palanquin,” said Ernest ; “you will be like an Indian princess. We must have an awning and curtains for you, so that you may be invisible when you choose.”

“O papa,” said Jack, “will you not allow Fritz and me to try to make our porters carry the palanquin ?”

I willingly gave my consent this once, because I was curious to see how the boys would teach them to come out in such a new character. They commenced by sounding a fanfare on our wooden trumpet to assemble the animals. They decided to begin with the buffalo and the bull ; and if they succeeded, to proceed with the onagra and the old donkey. The two first-named animals were then seized and made ready. Of course it was necessary to put on the new saddles to see how the animals would behave. The saddles were firmly attached by straps ; two poles were passed through the holes in the basket and fixed as shafts to each side of the animals. All turned out as we expected, because Jack and Frank had so accustomed the animals to obey them that they had not to repeat an order a second time.

Jack jumped upon the buffalo, Fritz upon the bull, while Ernest climbed more slowly into the basket. The two riders cried out “All right, go on,” and the two animals stepped out, but not without showing

some uneasiness at first. This new equipage looked remarkably well considering; but our new riders very soon got tired of proceeding at a walking pace, and urged their steeds into a trot. Ernest cried "Bravo," and manifested his delight by all sorts of signs and grimaces he made at his brothers. He had no idea of the fate which awaited him.

Suddenly the riders, finding that the trot was not sufficiently quick, broke into a gallop. Then the scene changed. The two cavaliers held firmly to their saddles, while the basket swung about in a fearful manner; and Ernest, half-angry, half-frightened, screamed as if he was having a tooth taken out. Tossed first to the right and then to the left, and seeing that there was no disposition on the part of his brothers to halt, he uttered yells such as I never heard surpassed. At last the animals, having reached the banks of the Jackal River, stood still of themselves, and remained motionless like actors awaiting applause.

We saluted the cavalcade with roars of laughter, because of the piteous position in which we found our poor philosopher. It appeared to me that the riders had given him a shaking on purpose, and had not sought to console him. The three brothers exchanged angry words. The phlegmatic doctor was quite shaken out of his usual *sang froid*. I pacified them, and took occasion to remark how very easily a joke gives rise

to a quarrel amongst young people. But their irritation quickly subsided, all resentment was forgotten, and then good humour returned as they led back the two animals to the stable; even Ernest coming to me to ask for a pinch of salt and a handful of corn for them. While the three brothers were getting it we continued our basket-making; but a terrible apparition very soon put everything else out of our head.

While Fritz, my wife, and I were resting in the shade, and were about to make some alterations in our hampers, Fritz's keen eye noticed something moving in the alley which led towards Falcon's Nest, and he suddenly jumped up, exclaiming, "What can that be which is advancing in such a strange manner?" The object which he pointed out was right opposite to us, and it



came on with a rolling, bounding motion. In any case there was no doubt that it was an animal of no ordinary size and strength.

"I have no idea what it can be," I said; "for our large animals are all in the stable."

"Oh," said my wife, "it is no doubt one of the sheep, or the sow, perhaps, which is rolling in the sand."

"No, no," replied Fritz; "it is something very curious. It looks almost like an enormous cable rolled out upon the ground, and sometimes it looks like a mast which raises itself from the earth and then remains motionless in the air."

"I must get my glass," I said, "to see what it can be: but meantime do not lose sight of it."

I ran into the grotto as I spoke, brought out the telescope as quickly as possible, and levelled it in the direction Fritz indicated.

"Nothing more has happened," he said. "The animal seems to have stopped; but I can perceive neither feet nor paws."

"O Fritz!" said my wife, "you make me afraid. I will go into the grotto and shut all the doors, except those on this side, for it appears to me that we have much cause to fear this animal."

"I begin to see a sort of greenish body, papa. What do you think of it?"

"Hum, hum," I replied. "It appears to me of a somewhat dangerous nature. Let the three children not wander away, and their mother should remain near us and prepare our arms. Then we can all retire to our retreat at Felsenheim and shut every opening."

"But what do you really think it can be, papa?" said Fritz.

"I have no doubt," I replied, "that it is an enormous serpent."

"In that case," replied Fritz, "I shall not be the last in the fight. I shall go and get a couple of guns and two hatchets."

"Be careful, my son," I replied. "The animal is very hard to kill, and possesses terrible strength. Go and rejoin your brothers, and keep our arms in readiness. I will follow you immediately, and we shall then see what we shall have to do."

Fritz left me with regret, and retired very slowly towards the grotto. The serpent, which was now rapidly approaching, was quite unknown to me, and he was already too near to be pleasant; so I merely waited to displace the planks of our bridge, and retired. The serpent appeared to be making directly for that spot. From time to time he raised his head high above the ground, darting out his forked tongue and looking slowly around him, as if to reconnoitre or in search of prey.

Now I had made up my mind, and at the moment he was crossing our bridge with defiant slowness, I hastened into the grotto and very slowly closed the door behind me. I rapidly mounted to the dove-cote, where I found the young people like so many warriors behind the ramparts of a fortress; but they did not show any great desire to engage in

battle before I appeared to reanimate their courage. Fritz handed me his gun. A profound silence reigned, in which we could hear the hum of the insects. We all took up our position behind the trellis windows of the grotto, from which we could see some distance without being seen.

The monster had already crossed the bridge and appeared to have a sort of suspicion, as if it had become aware of the vicinity of man. It continued to crawl along and raise its head every now and then, but whether by instinct or by chance, it came directly towards our grotto, and appeared to wish to lie down there; but it still advanced till within fifty paces of us. Suddenly, without any orders, and perhaps more from fear than any other motive, Ernest fired. Then Jack and Frank discharged their pieces, and to my great astonishment, my wife followed their example. The danger had given her courage to fight beside her children.

But this quadruple discharge appeared only to frighten the animal, which fled with great rapidity. It did not appear to have received the least wound, whether because its scales protected it or that the shots were too far distant, I do not know. However, Fritz and I gave it two more parting shots, of which it took no notice, and in another instant it disappeared in the reeds in the Wild-duck Marsh.

We each drew a long breath, as if relieved from a great weight. Speech returned to us all at the same moment. Every one wished that he had taken a better aim, and had made a more successful shot, though some maintained that they had certainly wounded the monster; while others pretended that the charge had not been sufficiently heavy to penetrate its scales. But all were agreed as to the immense proportions of the animal, which, in my estimation, could not have been less than thirty feet long; but opinions differed as to the colour of its skin, respecting which the boys chatted volubly. For my own part I was disgusted with the inefficacy of our fire. The danger was by no means over, and we were not safe so long as the boa remained in the neighbourhood. Even our united force would be insufficient against such an animal. Nevertheless we thought it only right to take every precaution. Meanwhile I forbade any one to leave the grotto, or to go out of doors in any direction without having received my express permission.





CHAPTER XXXVII.

A Terrible Neighbour.—The Devoted Donkey.—The Boa and its Prey.—A Fearful Sight.—Fascinated by the Tragedy.—Death of the Boa.—A Talk about Snakes.—The Secretary Bird.



THE fear of our terrible neighbour kept us confined to the grotto for three long days, for I still forbade any one to go out. The only exception was to procure indispensable things, and even then we took care not to go in the direction of the lake, and kept at a good distance from it.

All this time the monster gave not the least sign of its presence; and I would almost have believed it had disappeared by crossing to the other side of the marsh through some unknown passage in the rocks, if the agitation of our ducks and geese had not convinced me that it was still in the neighbourhood. Every evening, when they returned from their swimming in the lake or from wandering on the bank, they flew about for a long time above their usual resting-place in the reeds, and manifested their terror by cries of alarm and the rapid beating of their wings. They then took flight across the bay and sought a resting-place on Shark Island.

My embarrassment increased day by day. As the enemy was hidden in the midst of the reeds in a spot impossible to penetrate, no sure mode of attack presented itself. On the other hand, we were strictly shut up within the grotto, cut off from all our supplies, our provisions were rapidly diminishing, and our position was really becoming serious.

But our old donkey delivered us from this critical situation, and that by regular asinine obstinacy, which deprived the service he rendered us of all merit, while it should have recalled the celebrated geese of the capitol.

The little fodder which remained in the grotto since the rainy season, and which was specially determined for the use of the cow, was quite

exhausted on the evening of the third day, and it became really necessary to set about to procure some food for the animals if we would not share with them our provisions, which were very scanty. Something must be done, but at the same time we did not dare go out to seek fodder, so whether we would or not we were obliged to give the animals their liberty, and let them seek food themselves. But I wished at least to do this in such a way that the serpent should not reach either us or our animals. They could no longer cross the river by the ordinary bridge, but they might do so higher up by the ford where the plantations were, because at this point they could not be perceived from Wild-duck Marsh, and consequently we should have nothing to fear from the serpent.

So, soon after breakfast on the fourth day of the siege, we tied our beasts together in single file, and Fritz, who was the most courageous, and possessed the greatest presence of mind of all the lads, mounted his onagra and superintended the movement, because all the file would follow him patiently. He had orders if by any chance the enemy should show itself, and make the least movement towards him, to gallop as fast as he could to Falcon's Nest. The other boys and their mother were to remain indoors and fire upon the serpent from the windows, so as to frighten it at least, if it left its retreat to cross towards the Jackal River, or threaten our animals.

For my own part I determined to take up my position on a point of rock from which I could command a view of the marsh, and whence I hoped to be able to retire in case of danger, to direct the volleys which I intended should be more effective than the former. Before taking up my position I took care to load my gun with large bullets, and then we made preparations for departure.

Unfortunately my wife did not wait long enough—she opened the door a little too soon. An extraordinary energy seemed to take possession of the ass, and of which I should not have believed him capable. Three days' rest and food had inspired him with new strength, so much so that he broke his tether and rushed out kicking up his heels in a most fantastic manner. Fritz wished to ride after him and bring him back, and was already mounted upon the onagra for that purpose, but the ass was so delighted at his newly-acquired liberty that he fled at a gallop, and headed directly for the Ducks' Marsh.

Fritz and I called to him, but he paid no attention ; and my son hurried after him, but I was obliged to call him back. Fortunately he obeyed in time, for immediately the ass had reached the marsh we saw the terrible serpent advance towards him. A thrill of terror pervaded us all. The serpent raised its head, looked around it with glittering eyes, opened its enormous mouth, and darted its tongue out with a



most horrible joy. Meantime, our unfortunate fugitive, so proud at having escaped us, suddenly stopped, and uttered, as if to mock us, a loud hee-haw, which made the rocks echo again. Then the monster

darted on him like an arrow, folded him in its deadly embrace, squeezed him tighter and tighter, avoiding with wonderful dexterity the mad kicks of the poor donkey.

The children and their mother uttered cries of terror and grief, and hastened to the point of rock where I had taken up my position. We beheld a terrible sight. The boys cried out, "Fire, papa; let us shoot and save our poor old donkey." But I calmed them, saying,—

"We shall gain nothing by so doing. No doubt the serpent is just now so occupied that our voices have not alarmed it; but who can say, if we fire upon it, that it may not at once turn and attack us. We should then have a much greater loss to bewail than that of the ass. Better let us stay where we are and watch the issue of the affair. If we fired ever so well we could not save the donkey now. We had much better wait till the boa begins to swallow its victim, and when it cannot move as nimbly as it wishes, then we shall have the opportunity to approach it without danger."

"But it will never be able to swallow an ass at a single mouthful," said Jack. "That would be too horrible."

"Serpents," I replied, "have no teeth to masticate, they can only seize their prey; so how can they live if they do not swallow their victims whole? After all, it is not more horrible to see them swallow their prey than to see it torn in pieces by the tiger or wolf; it is only more extraordinary, and more alarming because more unusual?"

"But how can a serpent swallow his prey at a single mouthful? Is that snake venomous?" asked Fritz.

"No," I replied; "it is not venomous, but it is not the less terrible, because of its great strength. It does not separate the bones from the flesh of its victims, but squeezes it all up into a mass and swallows it."

"I do not understand," said Jack, "how the body of our ass can possibly pass down the monster's throat."

"It appears to me equally impossible," said Ernest, "that the serpent can swallow our ass entirely without leaving anything of it."

"Well, we shall soon see," replied Fritz, "what the monster will do; with what terrible force it will fold itself round and round the unfortunate beast; how it will crush it and bruise it until it reduces it almost to a pulp; it will then have moulded it to the size of its throat, and will swallow it as we should a mouthful of bread, only not so quickly."

"I can see that it is already commencing its horrible banquet," said my wife, "and I cannot bear to look at it. I will also take little Frank with me, for it is better not to let him see such terrible things."

In fact, I was very glad indeed that my wife retired with Frank, for the drama, if I may so call it, began to assume so hideous an aspect, that I could scarcely witness it myself. What Fritz had partly described

was being slowly carried out in a methodical manner. The boa had coiled its tail round an enormous piece of rock, so as to increase its power over the ass, which still resisted. The latter tried to kick with its hind legs, but in an instant the terrible reptile had seized him and enveloped him again and again, striking his head and seizing his nostrils in its terrible grip. At length the victim succumbed, and fell dead on the sand after a few convulsive movements.

The serpent lost not a moment, or rather it was only then that it began to crunch the bones, and soon the poor animal was nothing more than a shapeless mass, the head of which only was recognisable. To this horrible action another immediately succeeded even still more disgusting. The boa detached itself from the carcase, circled round it as if to enjoy its triumph, and began to cover it with a slimy saliva which proceeded abundantly from its throat. This continued for some time. It then placed itself before the mass, joined the fore feet of the donkey to the head, placed the hind feet in a line with the rest of the body and extended itself full length upon the ground. Then opening its enormous jaws, it commenced by swallowing the hind feet of its victim, and by degrees the thighs followed. At this moment it paused a little as if a bone had got across its throat ; it appeared to suffer and to make painful efforts until the whole of that portion was swallowed, but the more difficult the deglutition became, the more the saliva followed. At length there remained nothing to swallow but the head of the ass, which projected from the open jaws of the monster, for it appears that it had not crushed it sufficiently to pass down its throat. The operation had lasted from seven o'clock in the morning until mid-day.

As one may imagine, it was not the pleasure of the spectacle which attracted our attention—we had an object in view. One reason was that I wished to seize the most favourable moment to attack the serpent ; the other was to accustom my sons to a sight, which though terrible, need not alarm them nor deprive them of their presence of mind. I confess, however, that the horrible novelty of the spectacle kept us enchained as if by a magic power. But at length the long wished-for moment arrived, and I cried joyfully to my boys, "Forward, forward ; we can now conquer the monster, it is not in a condition to defend itself."

With my gun ready cocked, I was the first to leave our hiding-place and to advance towards the serpent, which was extended powerless on the border of the marsh. Fritz followed me closely, Jack remained about ten paces in the rear, and displayed a not unreasonable fear. My wife and Frank had not yet rejoined us ; and as for Ernest he remained prudently by the rock, and avoided the combat in which

we were about to engage, with a timidity which I thought it prudent not to remark.

When I approached the monster I could not help feeling a certain horror. I recognised the serpent king, the boa-constrictor of naturalists. At that moment it resembled an enormous beam from which two terrible glittering eyes stood out in relief.

When I reached a distance of eighteen to twenty paces from the boa, I fired, and Fritz followed my example. Both our shots entered its head. The forepart of the body and the jaws remained motionless as before, but the tail moved rapidly and struck blindly from side to side. We approached it to finish the work with pistols. The enormous tail extended itself in convulsive movements on the sand, and all signs of life soon departed.

At this moment, Jack, who wished to participate in the honour of the victory, came up and fired a pistol into its body. Suddenly a kind of galvanic motion appeared to reanimate the monster, and its tail struck the marksman so vigorously that it knocked him over. He quickly picked himself up and ran away to a little distance, when he put himself on his defence in a most comic manner, but the boa remained motionless. The death which it had inflicted on others had at length brought it down also.

We immediately raised a shout of victory which echoed round us and brought Ernest running up to the spot. Frank and his mother did not appear so quickly because they had been releasing the animals. We all remained for some seconds gazing at the immense serpent in the greatest astonishment. It seemed as if a new lease of life had been given us.

"For my part," exclaimed Ernest, who was always ready to exhibit his knowledge, "I think we ought to bless the poor donkey for his devotion; he was like Curtius, sacrificing himself for his countrymen."

"What shall we do with the body of the serpent?" asked Jack, who had recovered from his panic.

"We will stuff it," said Ernest, "in order to embellish our museum of natural history."

"But can we not eat this great serpent?" said Frank, "there is plenty to last us for many weeks."

"Eat serpent's flesh!" replied his mother; "and a serpent which is perhaps venomous too!"

"The boa is not venomous, my dear," I said; "and if it were, there would be no danger in eating it, provided that we discarded the head, in which the venom would be situated."

And now the children pestered me with questions on this subject, respecting which my knowledge of natural history enabled me to answer



THE SECRETARY BIRD.

without much trouble. Ernest, whose curiosity was never satisfied, and who seized every opportunity of instruction, asked me if it were true that serpents were sensible to music.

"Yes," I replied; "and not only do they like music, but they dance to it, raising themselves on the extremities of their tails. The Indian jugglers, who make them perform, cause them to be admired by the populations of less civilized countries. These jugglers have wrapped their art of charming in mystery, because this mystery is the only reason of their success with ignorant people. It is supposed that they use particular herbs gifted with a certain soporific power which the serpent cannot resist; and besides, it is thought that they extract their venomous teeth."

"How do they dare to do that, papa?" said Jack. "That must be a very dangerous operation."

"In a very simple manner, indeed," I replied. "The serpent advances, opening his mouth in a most threatening manner; they then offer him a piece of rag, upon which he seizes furiously, and which they immediately draw away with a jerk. His teeth are thus broken, and the animal is, for a time at least, unable to feed itself."

"But," continued Ernest, returning to his idea, "are not snake-charmers sorcerers?"

"I have answered you already," I replied, "and I believe I have given you a sufficiently clear explanation of their science. Your persistence to discover something marvellous in it, is that of the populace, that is to say of the ignorant, who remain in error because it is more seductive than truth."

"I do not deny it," said the doctor; "but I remember very well reading that rattlesnakes can subdue their prey by merely fixing their eyes upon them."

"That is to take the effect for the cause, my boy. What appears to be fascination on the part of the serpent, is nothing but terror on the part of the victim. Fear roots him to the spot—he dares not fly, and his enemy profits by his hesitation. Our ass is a case in point. It is true, nevertheless, that rattlesnakes can exhale to a certain distance a stupefying odour which envelopes their victims; but what is admissible in regard to these animals, ought to be rejected as far as man is concerned, who never permits himself to be fascinated by the odour nor by the gaze of a rattlesnake."

"Father," asked Fritz in his turn, "what ought one to do when bitten by a serpent?"

"First, my dear boy, to be bitten by the rattlesnake you must put yourself in the way of it, for it is of slow movement; and besides, it will not attack you unless you have wounded or annoyed it. An enemy which

makes you aware of its presence, both by the noise it makes and the odour it emits, is not a very formidable one, particularly when you are armed. I confess, nevertheless, that if, by imprudence on your part or by unfortunate accident, one of you should be bitten by a rattlesnake, the most efficient remedy would be to resolutely cut out the part bitten, and to rub gunpowder on the wound. Other less heroic means have succeeded, as for instance, rubbing the bite with salt water, or even with oil. People have also spoken of rubbing the wound with senega, but as I do not know this plant, prudence obliges me to recommend the two former remedies, strong ones though they be."

"It appears to me," said Ernest, "that the remedies are as bad as the disease itself."

"You would say quite the contrary, if you think that in a few hours after the bite of a rattlesnake, if you do not cauterize the wound, you die a horrible death, from which you could be saved by adopting the means I have mentioned."

"I am very sorry that we have serpents in our island," said little Frank; "we had not any in Switzerland, and it is very much better there."

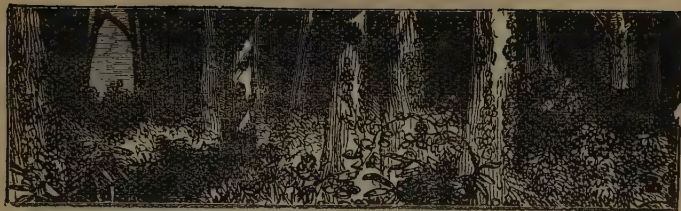
"Then do you wish to leave this beautiful island, and to return to those horribly crowded streets; to give up the bananas and the cocoa-nuts, to abandon our animals, our grotto, and our home in the tree? Shall I go and take your place in the diligence?"

"You are very naughty," he replied, "to laugh at your little Frank; but I do not like serpents, all the same."

"For my part," said my wife, "I am quite of Frank's opinion, and I shall not have a quiet moment when you are away."

"Take courage," I said, "and put your trust in Providence."





CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Stuffing the Serpent.—The Crystal Grotto.—Jack's Terror.—Ernest has killed a Young Boa.—Eels not Snakes.



OUR long conversation had served us in lieu of recreation, of which we had great need after so many hours of anxiety. It was time to think of raising the carcass of the boa. I asked my wife to bring us strong waters, and sent Jack and Fritz for their animals. Ernest and Frank remained with me close to the dead monster, to protect the beautiful skin against the attacks of birds of prey.

The boys soon returned, with the buffalos already harnessed, and we attached the traces to the mutilated head of the half-devoured donkey, and after an effort the cattle succeeded in extracting the remainder of the unfortunate animal. His grave was soon dug, and covered over with large fragments of rock. After these melancholy rites we fastened the tail of the boa to the traces, and dragged it to the grotto, taking care to hold up its head also in a sling, so that it was not injured by the rough ground.

"How shall we dissect this monster?" they said. "It is now your turn to devise the means. You are usually asking questions; now, perhaps, you will give us some advice."

"Observation and reflection lead to discovery; so do as Captain Stedman's negro did."

"But, papa, we do not know anything about him."

"Well, then," I said, "he put a cord round the neck of his boa, and dragged the serpent up to the branch of a tree, so that its tail hung down merely touching the ground. He then climbed up to the branch, and getting astride the body of the snake, he held on tightly with his left hand while he made a deep incision with his knife with the right. Then sliding down the body of the serpent as down a rope, and without

letting go the knife he cut a deep groove in the animal's body as he descended, and so facilitated the skinning of the boa.

"Well, then, let us do the same," exclaimed the children ; "but we cannot hope to do it as well as the negro."



"Under present circumstances," I said, "I think the opposite plan will be the best ; let us hoist up the serpent by the head in our slaughter-house, which we will prepare for the occasion. One of you shall then

get astride of the boa and insert a knife in its throat, so that the cutting shall proceed downwards as the carcase is drawn up."

"The negro's way of proceeding appears to me to be the more amusing," said Jack.

"In these operations," I replied, "the usefulness of the act must be considered, as well as the amusement it may give; and before all things, a starting point, and to make sure in what direction it will be best to proceed."

"The skinning," replied Ernest, "will not give us any less trouble, I expect."

"I would suggest another method," I said, "which may perhaps be successful. Suppose you detach the skin from the neck very carefully, and turn it back upon itself; then attach the buffalo to the part so turned over; let two of you continue to loosen the skin, while the buffalo is led away in the opposite direction, the skin will then be drawn from the boa completely. You can keep it in salt water, and clean it with sand and cinders. We must cleanse the head perfectly. You can then fix it on to the skin, and stuff the latter either with our artificial 'horse-hair,' or with cotton; and after it has been well dried in the sun you can deposit it in our museum of natural history."

"To hear you talk," said Fritz, "one would think it was the simplest thing in the world. But just consider the enormous size of the serpent; and if we did not cut away the skin with the greatest care, the buffalo might injure it irretrievably by dragging it off in a hurry."

"My children," I said, "when force is not sufficient, skill must come to the rescue. If you succeed in your attempt you will be all the more delighted."

"That is enough talking," cried Jack; "let us set to work."

"Patience," replied Fritz; "one word of advice before we begin will save a great deal of trouble afterwards."

In fact Fritz directed everything most patiently, and while gladly accepting my advice, the lads would none of my assistance.

They took off the skin of the boa without tearing it; after having washed and cleansed it perfectly they left it to dry, and set out to collect the moss and dry leaves to stuff it with.

I was very much pleased indeed to see my boys at work; while stuffing the skin they sewed up the back as they proceeded. Jack in his swimming costume actually crept inside. Fritz and Ernest handed him a quantity of moss, which he filled into the body of the boa. At length at the end of two days all this work was over; two small plaster marbles covered with isinglass replaced the eyes, and in lieu of the tongue we substituted a piece of iron wire painted red with cochineal. The boa thus stuffed was placed on strong cross-pieces of wood, around which I

coiled the uplifted head, with mouth extended as if about to strike its prey. Indeed, we had imparted such a natural appearance to it, that the dogs rushed at it, barking, and the buffalo was on the point of striking it with its horns. When it was quite dry we placed it in the "library," and the boys placed in front of it over the door a board on which was written, "Donkeys, beware;" no doubt indicating that the



library, placed under the protection of the boa, which was an enemy to donkeys, should only be entered by those who wished for information.

Having now escaped the danger with which the boa had threatened us, it only remained for us to ascertain whether the female we had killed had not left her mate or young ones at some other part of the island. To assure myself of this I resolved to undertake two expeditions; one, round Wild-duck Marsh, the other to Falcon's Nest, and

to the bamboo palisade which we had erected at the extremity of the great bay, which was the only spot at which an animal of such a size could enter our possessions.

I naturally commenced at Wild-duck Marsh. At the moment of departure Jack and Ernest evinced a great desire to remain at home; Jack even going so far as to say that he could not think of the monster without a shudder. But I did not wish to go without them on this occasion, and I encouraged them to look danger more boldly in the face, for it was only by so doing that we could hope to overcome it.

"Firmness and perseverance," I added, "can alone achieve what we have so well begun. It will be much more dangerous to leave the work half-done. Our safety necessitates our seeing whether or not the boa has left her young ones in the marsh, from which one day they could easily attack us."

We then started. Besides our ordinary arms we were each of us furnished with a long bamboo cane, with some planks and some bladders of the sea-dog to sustain us in the water in case of necessity.

We crossed the swamp by the aid of our bamboo canes and planks, one before the other. We noticed in many places traces of the boa amongst the crushed reeds, and circular impressions upon the soft earth. At the extremity of the swamp we remarked a quantity of herbs and rushes roughly put together in the form of a nest, but we could not discover any young ones nor eggs. Advancing a little farther towards the rocky boundary, we came upon a cave about twelve feet deep, from which ran a clear stream of water.

The ceiling and walls of this grotto were covered with stalactites or strong incrustations in all kinds of shapes. The soil appeared to be a very fine and soft white earth. On examining it more closely I was delighted to see that it was fullers' earth. We rolled some up into balls which we wrapped in our pocket handkerchiefs.

"Your mother will be delighted to see us come back with this soap," I said; "and I am not sorry myself, for now I shall be relieved of the trouble of burning the lime."

"But," said Ernest, "is not soap manufactured?" And Fritz in his turn asked if lime was not used in the composition of soap.

"Soap is usually made by a mixture of soda and potash, with fat, which reduces their caustic properties; for if we used alkaline salts only, we should run the risk of burning the linen and scorching our hands. However, because of the manual labour which is necessary in the preparation of these salts, soap is too expensive to be employed in very large quantities. As the saponaceous substance which has been substituted for it is principally employed in washing woollen stuffs by fullers, it has received the name of fullers' earth."

We now set about finding out the source of the stream which came out of a hole in the rock at some feet above the ground. We enlarged this hole by detaching some stones which had been undermined by the water. The opening then being sufficiently large, Fritz entered and informed me that he believed he had found out a sort of gully. I squeezed in after him, while Jack and Ernest remained prudently in the exterior cavern. After having crawled along for some minutes on my chest, we felt that the passage grew higher as we proceeded, and soon I



was enabled to stand upright. We then lighted two candles which we always carried in our game bags. Re-assured of the quality of the air by the brightness with which our candles burned, we advanced into the immense grotto, but with precaution. I then fired a pistol, the echoes of which were prolonged indefinitely.

Suddenly Fritz joyfully exclaimed, "O father, this is a new salt cavern; look at those enormous blocks, they glitter like crystal."

"You are mistaken, my boy," I said; "these are not salt blocks, for if so, they would be dissolved by the stream, which would also have a

saline taste. It is not salt, it is crystal, and we are in a regular palace of rock crystal."

"Really rock crystal," he said; "why, that is immensely valuable."

"No doubt," I said, "if we could only take it away; but in our position the crystal is no more use to us than the gold ingot was to Robinson Crusoe."

"In any case I will detach one of these prisms for further examination and to ornament our museum; but look, papa," he added, "this crystal is not transparent."

"That is not astonishing," I said; "you have broken it off in a wrong direction."

"How do you mean?" he asked.

"You must know," I said, "that all masses of crystal which are formed in columns or hexahedral pyramids spring from a crystalline stone, called mother crystal, which forms the base of the crystal itself. Many of these little columns united on this stone form a group of crystal. If you detach one of these little ones from its mother, it becomes suddenly dull and loses its brightness."

"But how then can one avoid dulling the crystal?" asked Fritz.

"It is necessary to remove the crystal very carefully from its mother stone, and afterwards to detach that underneath, so as not to injure the crystal column."

"But in that case we cannot carry away a specimen for our museum."

"Certainly not; but there is no danger that any one is likely to take away our treasure; and if any vessel should come to this shore, we can employ the necessary means to obtain it without injuring it."

"Was rock crystal discovered at first merely by chance?" asked Fritz.

"In the first instance, one no doubt found fragments of crystal which the heavy rains had detached, and which had been brought down by rivers into the valleys. By degrees, men traversing the mountains in search of crystal, began to observe certain stones in the rocks, and at length discovered galleries of crystal, as have been found amongst the Swiss mountains."

As we talked, we had searched the gallery in every direction, and Fritz was engaged endeavouring to detach a morsel of crystal for our museum. But the light of our candles began to wane, and we hastened to beat a retreat. Before leaving, Fritz fired another pistol which produced a similar effect to the former, from which I concluded that the grotto extended all through the rocky ledge, and perhaps only ended at the meadow.

Returning to the outer cavern we found Jack weeping and lamenting. As soon as I appeared he nearly stifled me with his caresses.

"What is the matter with you?" I inquired, much astonished at his agitation. "You are laughing and crying at the same time."

"Ah! how glad I am to see you both return. I heard such a terrible noise twice over; it sounded like the falling of a mountain, and I was afraid you might have got crushed by some great rock, and this thought quite upset me."

"My poor lad," I replied, "what you took for a fall of a rock was only the pistol shots which we fired to purify the air of the vault. We have been in no danger. Just look at that beautiful specimen of crystal which Fritz has got. But what has become of Ernest?"

"You will find him seated over there in the shade of the reeds."

We approached him and found him occupied in plaiting an immense flag basket. I asked him what put it into his head to make such a thing.

"I was thinking of our salmon and trout fishing in Switzerland," he replied, "and besides, I could not remain quiet with nothing to do."

"Quite right, my boy," I said, "you can always overcome *ennui* by work."

"But I have not lost my time, in any case," he replied; "for besides this basket-making I have killed a little boa."

You can imagine how my curiosity was aroused at these words.

"Let me see it," I said; "you have been much more fortunate than we have."

"But what have you done with it?" asked Fritz.

"It is over there wrapped up with my gun in the reeds," replied Ernest.

"Bravo," cried Jack, "we shall now be able to stuff the little one like its mother. They will form quite a nice group."

"Your boa, my friend," I said laughing loudly, "is nothing but a fine eel, which will make us a very excellent supper."

I stooped down to examine it closer, and said, "All these animals round here are not worms but little eels, which we ought to throw into the water so as to be able to catch them later on. Your mistake arose from your forgetting that the eel, like the viper, is viviparous, that is to say, it brings its young into the world alive and perfectly formed, instead of laying eggs as most fishes do." As I spoke we set out towards Felsenheim, carrying Fritz's crystal, Ernest's fish basket, and our planks and bamboos. We passed the marsh easily, as we walked along the rocks where the ground was firm and dry.

I found my wife occupied in washing our clothes. She was much pleased with the fullers' earth we had brought back. Little Frank, who was riding the young onagra, now came up to bid us welcome. We then showed them what we had brought back, and gave them a detailed account of our discoveries and adventures.



CHAPTER XXXIX.

An Excursion to the Great Bay.—The Capybara.—Rats discovered by Ernest.—A Colony of Beavers.—Musk and Rats.—The Civet Cat.—Cinnamon Apples.

I PROPOSED to my family that next day we should undertake an excursion to the great bay, and to the bamboo palisade. My suggestion was received with joy. We made our preparations as if for a military expedition. We put into the cart provisions for twenty days, our tent, some torches, pick-axes and shovels, and, in fact, everything we considered necessary for our safety. I had not only the idea of searching for the boa, but I wished above all things to erect in the passage of the great bay a barrier sufficiently high to stop wild beasts, and strong enough to resist the fury of the elements.

My wife took her place in the cart, which was drawn by the two buffaloes, ridden by Frank and Jack. Fritz on his onagra acted as scout; Ernest and I marched beside the carriage; the flanks were protected by our dogs; while the young onagra trotted sometimes before and sometimes behind us.

The first day we proceeded as far as the farm by the lake. Passing Falcon's Nest, we found some traces of the boa, but after a while we lost sight of them. The farm was in first-rate order. Our animals were all well, and had multiplied. We distributed amongst them some corn and some handfuls of salt.

After dinner we separated into two companies to explore the Lake of Swans on both sides at the same time. There were many reedy spots on the margin which I was determined to search for the eggs, or, perhaps, the young of the boa. I took Frank with me, and for the first time gave him a gun to carry, after I had given him the necessary instructions how to load and fire it without hurting himself. I proceeded down the left side of the lake, while Fritz and Jack took the other. We left

Ernest with his mother to cook the rice, under the guardianship of Turk and in the society of the monkey.

Frank and I, accompanied by the two well-trained young dogs, only coasted the lake for a little distance, for fear of sinking into the marshy ground bordered by the thick reeds. Meantime I sent the dogs several times into the rushes, and flushed many water-fowl something like



THE CAPYBARA.

herons, which swam away so rapidly that we could not reach them. Frank all this time was burning with impatience to put his sporting powers to the test.

Suddenly, on approaching the reeds, I heard a hoarse cry like that of a donkey. Very much astonished, we listened intently, when Frank exclaimed, "Papa, I believe that is the young onagra."

"He must have flown here," I said; "for if he escaped from the

farm, we should have seen him pass. But I believe that the cry we heard is that of a butor, or spotted heron, which is in many places called the water-ox."

"It must be very large indeed, to judge by its voice," said Frank.

"The voices of animals are not always in proportion to the size of their bodies," I replied, "but depend upon the size of the neck, the extent of the lungs, above all the force of their pectoral muscles. Nightingales and canaries are very small birds, nevertheless their song is very loud. People pretend that the spotted heron buries a part of its beak in the mud when it utters its cry, and in this way gives its voice the force of that of an ox."

"O papa," said Frank, "would it not be glorious if I could kill one of those birds?"

"Well, then, make ready; cock your gun, and I will hunt up the bird." I whistled to the dogs, and made them beat through the rushes without any result. On that I myself advanced. I heard a movement in the reeds, and immediately Frank fired.

"I have him," cried the little fellow joyfully.

"And what have you got?" I asked.

"A wild goose," he exclaimed, "like what Fritz killed."

"You mean an agouti," I said. "I hope it is not one of our sows that has been running in the wood."

I ran up to Frank, and on examining the animal which he had killed, I saw that it had some resemblance to a pig; but on closer inspection I recognised by the form of its incisor teeth, by the upper lip separated like that of a rabbit, by the absence of tail, and other marks, that the animal was a capybara, and belonged to the peccary family. I informed Frank (who was delighted with his skill) that the capybara was a native of South America, and much resembled the agouti; that the animal, which is very good to eat, only seeks its food at night; that it runs very slowly, but swims well, and can remain a long time under water. Frank, in the character of a hunter, took the capybara on his shoulders, but very soon the burden became too great for him. He was in a great perspiration, and felt fatigued; but as he did not wish to abandon his game, he laid down on the ground to rest. I pretended not to pay any attention to him, for I wished to see how he would get out of his trouble. In a few moments he cried out,—

"Oh, I can easily lighten my load by cleaning it, and then I shall not have so much to carry. I wish I had brought the bull: I could have put the game on his back."

"Well, my boy," I said, "you have now learnt by experience that there are no unalloyed pleasures in this world. Regret often embitters them. The trouble which your game has caused you has exceeded all



the pleasure you had in obtaining it. Before you shot it you were following the track as gay and unfettered as I. You see that poverty is often a blessing, and that riches are frequently very inconvenient."

Immediately detaching the bag which I always carried in our sporting expeditions, I put the capybara into it, and placed it on the back of one of the dogs. We pressed forward and very soon reached the Pine Wood,

where we stopped some time to gather and eat the fruit. If we had not discovered any traces of a boa, we now perceived many tracks of apes, which convinced me that these horrible animals had not altogether abandoned the neighbourhood of our colonies, but the greater number of them had retired from the vicinity of Prospect Hill.

When we returned to the farm we found that Ernest had killed an immense number of rats during our absence. I asked him to tell me how he had managed to do so.

"While I was collecting the rice," he said, "and at the same time cutting away the straw for baskets, I remarked on the ground, near the rushes, some little embankments raised three or four inches above the soil. Being curious to see whether this was accidental or the work of animals, I went forward to examine them, when I saw master Knips, the monkey, with a great rat, which he held by the paws and which he was attempting to draw out of the hole. I immediately killed the rat, and in so doing drove my stick into a singular nest formed of mud and rice straw. A number of rats immediately ran out, and, passing between my legs, jumped into the water. I returned to the attack, but this time I placed the sack, into which I had been gathering the rice, before the hole. The rats ran into it, and I killed them by blows with my stick. Their cries summoned a whole band of rats, which immediately began to attack my legs. I struck right and left on these new assailants; but I should have fared badly had I not been unexpectedly assisted by Jack's jackal, which ran up to help me and soon gave me the victory. The rats left more than twenty of their dead behind them; the rest hastily regained their hole, or took refuge in the water."

"But," said I, "what induced you, my pacific Ernest, to massacre these animals in such a manner?"

"I was at first of opinion that they would injure our rice crop," said he; "but when they attacked me on all sides so suddenly, I thought only of killing the rats for my own defence."

"Since that is the case, my friend," I said, "I must not blame you; but now conduct us to these rats' nests, if you please."

Ernest hastened to point them out. I perceived that the nests had some resemblance to the beavers', and I said,—

"All these indications around me go to prove that these are muskrats, known to naturalists as *ondatras*. Celebrated amongst building animals, these rats, which in many respects resemble the beavers, particularly in the formation of their feet and tail, possess posterior glands, in which they secrete a kind of greasy substance strongly impregnated with the odour of musk. The furs of your victims, Ernest, will be very useful, because this smell of musk, which they never will lose, preserves them against moths and other animals."

"What do we want with fur," said Ernest, "in such a warm climate as this?"

"If they do not prove useful as garments," I said, "these will make us excellent hats when our present ones are worn out."

As we were returning to the farm, we met Jack and Fritz, who were coming back from their excursion. Jack carried in his hat a dozen beautiful eggs wrapped up in a species of skin, and his brother carried a fine male and female grouse which they had apparently shot. Seeing that neither of them looked very contented, I asked them if they had not killed the hen on her eggs.

"Oh, certainly not," replied Fritz; "it was the jackal that did this wicked action, and I arrived too late to prevent him. I hope the eggs will not prove useless."

"I hope not," said Jack, "for I have carried them in their own nest, and it is so well lined with leaves and wool."

"Well, now, Jack," I said, "run away and carry these eggs to the farm, and put them under two hens that are sitting."

"Very willingly," he replied; "but first tell me, please, what sort of leaves these are that I have found in the nest."

"This plant, which is common to the Cape of Good Hope, is called, if I mistake not, '*buphuris gigantia*' by botanists. The soft down of its leaves is used to make gloves and stockings, and in the manufacture of hats it can with advantage be mixed with the hair of the musk rat."

"Musk rats?" asked Fritz, "when did you find them?"

"Ernest killed about twenty when we were on our excursion just now."

"Really," exclaimed Fritz and Jack together, "let us go and see them." And they immediately set off with such a pace towards the farm, that I had some trouble to keep up with them. When they had placed the eggs in their mother's hands, we all set to to skin the musk rats, and I extended the skins to dry in the sun. The bodies we were obliged to bury, for the dogs, repelled by the odour of musk, would not touch them. We also skinned Frank's cabiai, and my wife roasted a portion of it; but we found the taste so disagreeable, that the whole carcase was given to the dogs, who appeared to like it better than we did.

While we were at dinner the children asked what use the musk was to the rat.

"It is only by its means," I replied, "that these animals are able to find each other so easily or to attract their prey. The crocodile furnishes us with a proof, for it is stated that it also makes use of this odour of musk as a bait to take fish. On the other hand, this peculiar smell might drive away other animals."

"Does the crocodile smell of musk?"

"Certainly," I replied ; "but not so strongly as the musk animals."

"Are there many musk and strong-smelling animals?" asked Fritz.

"The hyena and the badger have each a posterior gland filled with a strongly-smelling substance which no doubt impregnates all their skin. The beaver also carries this grease in two little hairy pouches. This stuff bears some resemblance to *colophony*, is a remedy for gout, and is used under the name of castoreum in nervous affections. The civet and the musk have a more agreeable odour : the latter carries the secretion in a species of sack, the musk pig possesses it in a gland on the back, and amongst the musk deer it is deposited in the corner of the



MUSK OX.

eye. When quite fresh, the smell of these different substances, particularly that of the musk, is so strong, it is said, as to cause bleeding of the nose. When stale and dry, this musk liquor, as well as that of the civet, possesses a smell which is extremely agreeable to some people, though very unpleasant to others."

"Is the musk smell very different from that of the civet?" asked Fritz.

"It is stated," I replied, "that the odour of the civet is more pleasant than that of the musk."

"But how do they manage to collect these scents?"

"The cupidity of man only succeeds in obtaining it at the expense of

the animal's life. Civets, or musk cats, are tamed in the East as well as in Holland, and they take the scent from them by putting them into very narrow cages, something like mousetraps, in which they cannot turn round; and the animals deposit a little of the scent, sometimes on the tail, sometimes on the paws, when they find themselves caught in the trap."

"But what do they give them to eat all this time?"

"Eggs and fruit; but the Dutch, to increase the odorous deposit, frequently feed their prisoners on fowls and pigeons."



CIVET CAT.

"I prefer the musk ox," said Ernest; "for not only is this animal prettier and something like a goat, but his food is less expensive,—grass, leaves and moss would supply his table well. How do they obtain the musk?"

"This substance is contained in a pocket situated in the umbilical region of a ruminating quadruped, which is analogous to the gazelle. When the animal has been killed in hunting, it is immediately robbed of its musk by detaching this pouch from the flesh and wrapping it up in a skin. This is done to prevent any adulteration in the musk.

"Musk comes to us principally from Tonquin; it is found as an article of commerce either separated from this envelope or still wrapped up in it. It is very liable to be adulterated by the Indians. The portion without a wrapper ought to be very dry, of a very strong odour, of the

colour of tan, and of a bitter taste ; and if not adulterated with either earth or resin, it ought to consume away entirely if placed in the fire. The envelope which contains the musk ought to be covered with brown hair. It is really the skin of the animal itself. When the hair is white it shows that it is Bengal musk, which is inferior to that which comes from Tonquin."

"Well," said Ernest, "we must really get some dessert to take the taste of this horrible cabiai out of our mouths."

"Yes, some dessert," cried Jack and Frank, as they ran to get their game bags.

"Here is an excellent cocoa-nut," said Frank, on his return ; "and also some pine-apples."

Jack on his part placed upon the table some small, green, shiny apples, which had the odour of cinnamon.

The two boys jumped joyously round the table, clapping their hands.

"What singular fruits," I exclaimed ; "one might take these for pine-apples or ananas. I say, Jack, have you already tasted them?"

"No, papa," replied Jack ; "Fritz would not let me, for fear they should be the poisonous manchineel apples."

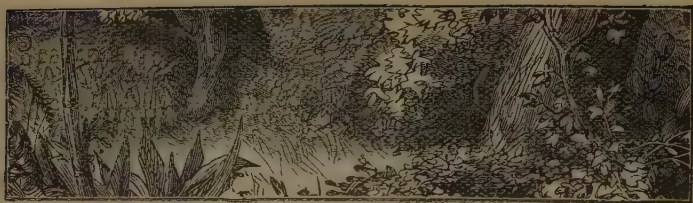
While praising Fritz's precaution, I observed to him as I cut one of these unknown apples, that the manchineel fruit has a complete skin and a very hard kernel in the middle ; while these apples had pips, and were distinguished also from the poisonous fruit by their size and sweet smell.

While I was giving this explanation, master Knips glided up close to me and ran away with half the apple, which he began to eat in a corner.

All the children commenced to laugh, and attacked the apples at once. It was with some difficulty that I managed to keep a couple for my wife and myself ; and after we had tasted them, we unanimously praised their excellent flavour.

Fritz asked me what the name of the apples was ; and I replied that I believed them to be the cinnamon apples, which come from the Antilles.





CHAPTER XL.

The Sugar-cane Plantation.—A Troop of Hogs.—The Peccaries.—Roast Pigs.—Smoking the Meat.—Prospect Hill.



EXT morning at daybreak we set out for the sugar-cane plantation, in the neighbourhood of which we had left a small hut of branches. It was near the great bay beyond Cape Disappointment, where our poor ass in one of his excursions had taken flight. We found the hut in a very dilapidated condition; so we threw our tent cloth over it, for as we did not purpose to remain there more than a few hours, we had made no preparations except for dinner. While it was being prepared I went with Fritz, Jack, and Frank into the plantation to search for any traces of serpents, but fortunately found none.

We cut some canes, which we sucked with great pleasure. We had not been long engaged in this pleasant occupation, when our dogs began to bark, and we heard a most extraordinary movement in the reeds; not knowing what enemy we might have to do with, we judged it prudent to retreat to the open ground. Scarcely had we got clear of the reeds, than we saw a whole troop of little pigs come out of the canes. My first impression was that it was the old sow and her younger ones which we had formerly liberated; but the number of the animals, their grey colour, and their shape, quickly decided me that they were not European pigs, and I shot two of them. By no means disconcerted at this, they calmly proceeded in single file, and in as good order as soldiers on parade, perhaps if we had looked closer we should have seen they had trodden in exactly the same spots. Fritz and Jack, fired by my example, also discharged their guns, and also killed some of these inoffensive animals; while the dogs dragged down a couple more, thus adding to the number of the killed. When we examined them, I saw that these animals were the musk or Siam pigs. I remembered reading somewhere that their flesh

is very good to eat, if one cuts out, immediately after death, a small gland, which prevents the offensive liquid from permeating the flesh and giving it a nasty taste. I gave my children directions how to accomplish this, and we proceeded accordingly. While thus engaged we heard two shots in the direction of our hut, which must have been fired by Ernest and my wife. I immediately despatched Jack to see what they were about, and also to find the cart and the buffalo.

The conveyance very quickly arrived, Ernest stretched full length in it; he told us how the troop of little pigs had passed near our hut and had



taken refuge amongst the bamboos. He added that he and his mother had killed two, while Turk had pulled down a third.

I employed my children in loading the cart with the game, and Fritz advised that we should skin and clean the animals first. "They are scarcely three feet long," he said, "and I am by no means astonished that Captain Cook's crew took so little time in preparing all the pigs they found at Otaheite, if they were the same species."

I replied that those he referred to most likely belonged to the Siam race, which possess such a very large belly, that it almost drags on the

ground, but that they were not much bigger than the "peccaries" which we had killed, and which were found in Guiana and throughout America.



"In other respects I think Fritz is right, and that we ought to skin our booty at once," I added.

This occupied us for several hours ; dinner time passed away, and yet we could not stop to satisfy our hunger and thirst, except by sucking the sugar canes which we held in our mouths like cigars, as we worked.

When we had finished our troublesome job we put all the peccaries, each of which weighed a hundredweight, into the cart. The boys covered up the conveyance with leaves and branches as a sign of rejoicing, and decorated themselves with flowers. In this manner I returned to my wife, who was expecting us with impatience.

"Well," she said, "it appears to me that you are not hungry ; the roast meat is spoiled, and now we must pass the night in this hut."

The only reply I made to this address was to show my wife the result of our hunting ; and the boys laid at her feet a large packet of sugar canes, saying, as they did so, "It is only fair you should have something to eat, as no doubt the heat of the fire you have been keeping up has burned you quite as much as the rays of the sun have scorched us."

"I am very much obliged to you, my boys," she said ; "but, my dear," she continued, addressing me, "what use can we make of all these animals ; you are usually much more economical of the resources of this country."

"Fortune has favoured us beyond our expectation," I replied, "and all our shots told ; besides, I am not at all sorry to have such a good stock of meat which we can salt and smoke, and make excellent hams of. I am also very glad to have reduced the number of these marauders, which would very soon have devastated our sugar-cane plantation, and any other we might have made."

After a substantial, but hurried meal, each one set about his allotted task. Assisted by Ernest, I cut out the hams and cutlets from the peccaries.

The fat of these animals does not only collect under the skin, as in the European pig, but mingles with the flesh, as in the case of the boar, and they are easier to cure. I threw the refuse to the dogs and the jackal ; the other portions, after I had washed them thoroughly, I placed in sacks open at the top, and suspended them from the branches of the trees. I then threw salt water over them, which dropped through the bags into calabashes underneath, and this operation was repeated from time to time. We continued this basting process till the next evening, when the hut was ready for the smoking operation. A portion of the morning was consumed in preparing a roast joint after the Otaheite fashion. Fritz treated this in the following manner,—he instructed his brothers, to whom he acted as chief cook, to dig a deep round hole ; in that they burnt an immense quantity of wood and reeds, and heated some large stones in the flame. Meantime Fritz prepared a peccary. He stuffed it with potatoes, and rubbed salt on it ; this was the only point in which

he did not follow the cooks of Otaheite, for they do not season their roast meat.

My wife, who had nothing to do but to look on, nodded her head knowingly, and murmured, "A whole pig, in the ground, too, with hot stones : a nice sort of stew that will make !"

Notwithstanding her critical observations, she pointed out to Fritz how best to arrange the limbs of the peccary so that they should occupy



MONKEYS.

the least possible space on the hearth, and look best when brought to table. Not having any large banana leaves, Fritz had enveloped his roast meat in ordinary leaves and in bark. He afterwards laid it on red-hot stones on the still glowing wood and hot cinders.

My wife, who had seen us burying the joint, clasped her hands with a semi-tragic air, and exclaimed, "What wretched cookery ; it may be all very well for the Otaheitans who are half-savages, but it certainly

will not suit freeborn Switzers, who know something about cookery and turnspits."

"Yes, indeed, mamma is quite right," said Ernest; "we shall have our dinner spoiled and burnt to ashes, which will be something like the money-lender's donkey which was roasted in Tartary."

"I could almost fancy you were the cynical John Falstaff of Shakespeare. Such emphatic terms as those are wasted on such a simple subject; but do not let us judge too hastily."

"Do not be in a hurry," said Fritz, "and you will see something new. More than one explorer has eaten flesh roasted in this manner, and found it delicious."

"Meantime," I said, "until dinner is ready, let us go and finish the hut for smoking the peccaries; we have there forty hams which want arranging. They are very good, but I wish to make them as nice as the Oberland or Westphalian hams."

By all working together we very soon got the hut ready, which was quite large enough for all our store of meat.

We lit a great fire of wood, of grass, and green leaves, and kept up the fire and the smoke for two whole days.

This smoking of our meat lasted for three days altogether, during which time we made many expeditions in the surrounding country. My wife with one of the boys always remained behind to look after the smoking, and to prepare our food. The principal work we did during this time was to cut a road through the bamboo plantation, large enough for our conveyance to pass through. We encountered several clumps as big as trees, eighteen or twenty metres high. When we cut these down, we found material to make casks, tubs, and basins. Around the root of each bamboo grew long strong spines, and I made a collection of these to serve as rails. These spines inclosed the bamboo plants in the form of a quiver. From these young shoots a saccharine substance exuded at every knot, which, when dried in the sun, had the appearance of nitre. My boys took care to detach this sugar for their mother's use.

Near these large roots we discovered a great quantity of young shoots. These shoots divided like kid's horns, and appeared to be composed like the cabbage palm, of a tuft of tender leaves rolled together. They were yellowish, about an inch or rather more in thickness. When cut to the height of about six inches they resembled asparagus. We carried a number home to see if they would be good to eat.

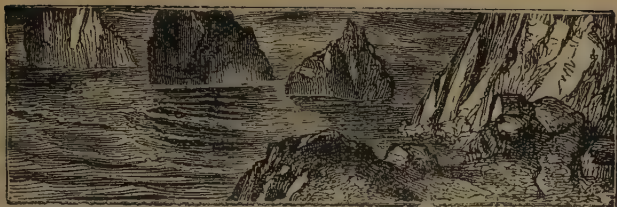
My wife was agreeably surprised to see us come home with so many different things, and she made haste to put our horned bamboo cabbage into the pot with palm vinegar, and ravensera leaves. Afterwards she added the cocoa-nut vinegar, which the Chinese use with these fruits, which they eat as we ate ours, or as we eat olives or capers at home.

The following day we made another excursion to Prospect Hill, where I had the mortification to find our farm entirely devastated by the monkeys.

All the cattle which we left behind us had strayed into the neighbourhood, dispersed and alarmed. We saw that it would be absolutely necessary for us to exterminate the whole race of monkeys if we wished to preserve our crops. Obligated to put off the punishment of these destructive animals to another time, we returned angrily to our hut. Nevertheless we consoled ourselves with the reflection that in the midst of all our comforts these troubles and worries only served to prevent us falling into a state of idleness and inactivity.

After some days, when we had finished cutting the road through the canes, we resolved to continue our route. We took some hams with us for our immediate necessities, and left the rest in the hut in which we had smoked them; but to protect the meat from birds of prey, monkeys, or jackals, we raised an immense rampart of sand all round the hut, as high as the roof, and then covered it all over with grass and branches and spikes. This work occupied us another day. At length one morning we struck our tent, and full of trust in Providence, we continued our patriarchal march by the road we had cut through the bamboo plantation.





CHAPTER XLI.

We reach the Defile.—Wild Cats.—The Desert.—A Troop of Horsemen!—The Ostriches.—How to take them.—The Eagle let fly.—A Captive.—The Ostrich Eggs.—Land Turtles.



FTER proceeding for two hours we reached the end of our journey, namely, the extremity of the bamboo palisade, without any adventure. We halted on the borders of a little wood, and determined to pitch our tent at the foot of a rock, on a mound which was covered with trees, and which commanded the approach to the palisade, like a fortress.

"Oh, what a splendid position!" said Fritz. "Some day, if we have time, we ought to build a tower here from which we could repel any attack that might be made."

He made up his mind to build a summer residence in this place, after the fashion of the Kamschatkian huts, which are built upon four elevated posts, and into which the inhabitants mount by means of steps cut in the trunk of a tree. By attaching our cattle to the four posts underneath, we could easily protect them as well.

"We will think of all this later," I replied; "but just now let us explore yonder wood, to ascertain whether it harbours any dangerous animal."

We encountered nothing but a few wild cats of the Margay species, which ran away very rapidly into the thicket when they caught sight of us. Somewhat overcome by the heat, we employed the rest of the day in putting our cabin to rights. We did not finish until the freshness of evening induced us to explore our route for the morrow.

We rose with the dawn, and this time I took with me my three eldest sons, so that we should be in force if we encountered any danger in the unknown places of the savannah. My wife and Frank remained behind under the protection of the jackal and one of the dogs. After a sub-

stantial breakfast we started. We found the bamboo palisade overturned, and the prickly plants which we had collected to defend the path, dispersed in all directions.

We saw that the overflowing of the river and the high winds had overthrown the fence, which we had not built sufficiently strong; and many traces showed us that the boa, as well as the peccaries, had only



come from the meadows into our possessions since the construction of the palisade. We acknowledged the necessity of making it stronger and more solid, but were forced to postpone the execution of this work till our return. We continued our march, and having crossed the river on a bridge formed of the trunk of a tree, we stepped forth and beheld a panorama of the country in which we had already advanced on our

last excursion, when we captured the buffalo. A little hill, not very high, and covered with arbutus, rose on the horizon and bounded the view. I took this as our final resting-place, hoping that from its summit we should discover the utmost limits of the savannah.

So long as we could skirt the big river, our eyes rested with delight on its green banks, and our course was rapid and agreeable; but as soon as we descended into the plain, we stepped upon a parched soil seamed with many a deep crack. All traces of vegetation had disappeared, a few dead geraniums alone formed a slight contrast to the utter sterility of the soil. The heat was overpowering, and after half an hour's walking, Jack cried out,—

"Father, this country has very much changed since the last time we were here."

"You are mistaken, my boy," I replied. "In our first excursion we did not come beyond the border of the river yonder, and it is not credible that the soil of this country can be so absolutely barren. It is only the absence of water which prevents the growth of vegetation. During the rainy season the savannah will be covered with verdure, and for many weeks would present a beautiful appearance; but immediately the rain ceases and the sun darts its rays down upon the land, plants begin to dry up and are very soon dead for want of moisture."

The conversation now began to languish. The ill-humour of my boys broke out, and they expressed their irritation by continuous grumbling.

"One would think we were in Arabia Petræa," said one.

"This is a horribly dried-up place," said another.

"It is only fit for evil spirits to live in," said a third; "there are nothing but poisonous plants all round in these deadly fields."

"For my part," said Ernest, "I believe that this country is undermined by fire."

"Courage, courage, boys," I said: "wait a little longer; there is no pleasure without pain. Who knows but that behind yonder hill we shall find refreshing fruits and running streams."

At length, after a weary march of two hours, we reached our destination and threw ourselves down under the shade of a rock. Exhausted by heat and fatigue, we had not the courage to clamber up the hill and choose a place of rest whence we could have a good view. Stretched on the ground, we examined, for some time in silence, the extent of country which opened before us.

On the horizon, fifteen or twenty leagues distance, was a blue chain of high mountains, the bases of which were covered with mist. Following the course of the river along the plain, the reeds and bushes on its

banks seemed to indicate that it took its rise in those mountains. The river formed a silver band with a green border, so to speak, upon a dull carpet, in which one could no longer distinguish the colours. After Bruce's description, I could almost fancy that this was the Nile, and that it was the Nubian desert.

We had scarcely snatched half an hour's repose, when master Knips suddenly jumped up, and making a series of grimaces, darted with his basket towards the top of the mountain.

All the dogs followed him. I fancied that the monkey had perceived a troop of his own species, or that he had found out some dainty. Upset as we were by the heat, we had not the energy to pursue him. I had just drawn from my game-bag some pieces of sugar-cane which I



had brought with me unknown to the boys. One may imagine with what joy they welcomed this unexpected treat. After we had refreshed ourselves, we thought we should be able to do justice to our provisions, and some slices of roast peccary quickly renewed our strength and good humour.

After our dinner Fritz got up, and going to the bottom of the rock began to look all round.

In a few seconds he cried out, "It seems to me there is a troop of horsemen over there who are coming towards us with full gallop. I will make a bet that they are Arabs."

"Call them Bedouins," retorted Ernest, "while you are about it."

"Most probably they are neither one nor the other," I said; "but if they are Arabs they are equally Bedouins. It seems that the pro-

fessor has forgotten that the name of Bedouin merely indicates a nomadic tribe of Arabs. Now Fritz, take the telescope and see what you make them out to be."

"I fancy I can see a numerous herd of cattle, with loaded wagons of hay going backwards and forward amongst them."

"Nonsense," said Jack; "you are dreaming. Give me the glass and let me see."

"Hallo!" he cried, "why, they are Arabs after all. I can see the pennons on their lances. Let us call up the dogs to meet them."

"We had very much better not show ourselves at all," said Ernest; "but quietly beat a retreat."

"Before doing so," I said; "let us see if your eyes and imagination do not play you false. I mistrust you very much since your story about the shoal of herrings. Now, Jack, give me the glass and let me examine them coolly. The wagons of hay, Fritz, appear to me either elephants or rhinoceros, the herds are buffaloes and antelopes, or zebras and quaggas. As for the Arabs armed with lances, they are,—can you guess what?"

"Giraffes?" said Jack.

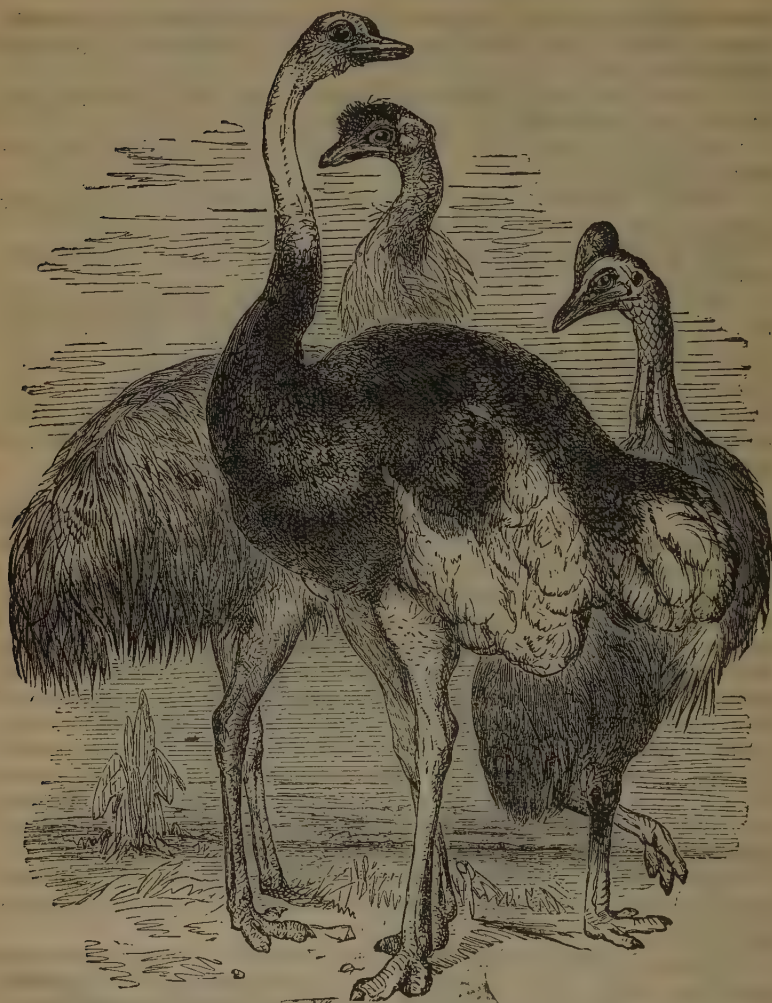
"No," I replied; "on this occasion you must be content with ostriches; we will hunt them presently, and see if we cannot take one alive, or at least obtain some of their feathers."

While Jack and Fritz set out to seek the monkey and the dogs, I looked around to discover some portion of the wood whence we could observe the approach of the animals without being seen by them. I noticed that in the midst of a heap of stones some leafless shrubs were growing on the top of a mound. Approaching these trees I perceived that they were the euphorbia plant. If one makes an incision in this plant it yields a poisonous gummy matter, but from which a powder may be manufactured which is very useful in medicine. As I passed them I made three or four cuts in the largest stems with the intention to collect the gum. But Ernest took no notice of what I was about, for he was greatly occupied with the movements of the ostriches.

Fritz and Jack very soon returned with master Knips, who had gone to refresh himself and to take a bath with the dogs, as we could readily perceive from the condition of their paws.

We now set about concerting a plan by which we might surprise the ostriches, which were approaching us unsuspectingly, and amusing themselves. The troop consisted of four females and one male, which we could recognise some distance off by its variegated feathers. I called my sons' particular attention to him, and we made up our minds to pursue him alone.

"I believe," I said; "that in such a chase as this Fritz's eagle would



OSTRICHES AND EMUS.

gain more glory than any of us, for we could do little against such birds as these."

"You must not forget, father, that Ernest has gained the prize for running, and that Fritz and I are by no means bad runners either."

"And what is your speed compared with that of an ostrich?" I replied. "A horse at full gallop is nothing to their pace."

"Then how can the Arabs catch them?"

"They always have recourse to stratagem, which is suggested by the flight of the ostrich itself. When it sees itself pursued, it flies in a circle of three or four leagues, but always returns again to the same point from which it started. The hunter, therefore, on horseback, confines himself to the inner circumference of this circle, presses the ostrich very closely, and obliges it to traverse a great deal more ground than he does. Immediately the hunter perceives his horse getting tired, he gives the signal, and the nearest hunter takes his place just when the unfortunate ostrich is almost ready to drop with fatigue. By this means they tire it out and afterwards despatch it."

"On these occasions," said Ernest, "is it true that the ostrich will hide its head in the sand or behind a stone, and foolishly imagine, because it cannot see, that nobody can see it?"

"Who can tell what an ostrich thinks? But I am of a contrary opinion, and think that the ostrich is not so foolish as you imagine; and it probably only hides its head to keep it unharmed, or to be able to defend itself better with its legs. But as we are on foot, the plan resorted to by the Arabs is of no use to us; all we can do is to prepare our ball-slings and hold the dogs in leash, for I have observed that the animals in this country have more fear of dogs than of us."

Advancing softly, we arrived within two hundred paces of the ostriches. Being no longer masked by the euphoria, I recommended my boys not to make the least movement, nor utter a sound, so that the ostriches, seeing us perfectly motionless, might confound us with the stones by which we were surrounded. But our dogs would not permit themselves to be held as we expected; giving way to their instincts they broke their leash and charged furiously upon the male ostrich, which was marching at the head of the troop. All the birds immediately fled with inconceivable rapidity. They scarcely seemed to touch the earth in their flight, and their wings agitated by the rapidity of their movements, gave them the appearance of a mass of white down driven forward by the wind.

We had almost lost sight of them when Fritz hastily unhooded his eagle. It very soon pursued them, and overtaking the male ostrich, fastened upon him. We hurried up, and when we arrived at the field of battle we found the poor bird rolling in the dust. The eagle had wounded him severely in the neck and shoulders, while the dogs had pulled the poor animal down. All hope of saving his life being at an end, I gave him the *coup de grace* to put him out of his pain. We immediately extracted the beautiful feathers from his tail, and also

from his wings, the latter being much smaller and less valuable. It was rather absurd to see our old hats surmounted by splendid ostrich feathers similar to those that the Mexican princes formerly wore; and I could not help smiling at the vanity of man, who adorns his head with what has covered the tail of an ostrich.

While examining the ostrich, Fritz cried out, "What a pity it is we could not have kept him alive. He is six feet high, and would easily have carried a rider like me."

"But look here," said Jack; "see how fat he is. I wonder what he can find to eat in this desert place. Is it really true that they exist upon pebbles and iron?"

"The ostrich," I replied, "swallows pebbles, sand, and even pieces of iron, but it is not for food. I believe that they do not disdain to devour serpents, lizards, and other reptiles. Besides, there are even in a desert some plants and fruits, and distance is nothing to an animal that can run as fast as they do."

"What is the use of these horny excrescences which they have on their wings?" said Fritz.

"They serve them as a defence against their enemies in front similarly as kicking will preserve them from attacks in the rear. It has been stated that when running away they kick up stones against their pursuers. That may be, for horses will also do the same thing when galloping on stony ground."

"Papa," said Fritz; "do the ostriches utter any peculiar cry?"

"They say that their sharp piercing cries are often heard at night, and that sometimes their voice resembles the roar of a lion."

Ernest and Jack, who had now gone forward with the jackal, suddenly stopped, and waving their hats in the air, signed to us to rejoin them. As we advanced they cried out, "Come on quickly, we have found an ostrich's nest."

And in fact, when we came up, we found them contemplating the nest with great admiration. This nest was merely a hole scratched in the sand; the eggs, about thirty in number, were so disposed as to take up the space and to preserve the heat.

Each egg was about the size of a baby's head. The jackal had already broken some of them by the time we arrived, and we saw the chickens already formed come out of some of them and run a few paces on the sand.

"We might have saved ourselves the trouble of hunting the ostriches," said Jack. "We can now carry away these eggs, and expose them to the sun till the little ones are hatched."

"But you forget, my friends," said I, "that there are thirty eggs, each one of which weighs about three pounds, and how can we carry

them without breaking them? Besides, it is necessary the eggs should be incubated during the night, and that is a task which is beyond our strength. We had better leave them where they are till to-morrow, and then come to seek for them with our cart."

"Permit us at any rate to take one each, it will be so amusing to have ostriches in our poultry yard."

"Very well, arrange it as you please; but take care to remove the eggs in such a way that the ostrich may not perceive that the nest has been meddled with, for otherwise the whole brood will be lost."

Seeing the embarrassment of the boys, I advised them to put the eggs separately into their pocket handkerchiefs, which they could knot at the corners and carry them like a sling. But Fritz, who wished to carry an egg in each hand, very soon got fatigued. I suggested that he should follow the example of the Dutch milkmaids, who carry the cans suspended from a cross piece which fits transversely across their shoulders. He endeavoured to utilize this idea by cutting a strong twig, and actually got so far as to get the eggs into equilibrium, and marched quite as well as if he had nothing to carry. His brothers followed his example and succeeded very well.

Leaving the hill behind us we directed our steps towards the great river. About half-way we encountered a pond of sweet fresh water, which appeared to rise from some hidden source and ran away in a little stream.

All around the margin of the pond were the impressions of the hoofs of antelopes, buffaloes, and zebras, which came to drink there; and from recent traces we discovered that it must have been in this water that master Knip and the dogs had taken their bath. We found some vestige of another footstep, but it was impossible to divine whether of a man or an ape; but, on the other hand, we could find no trace whatever that the boa had passed this place.

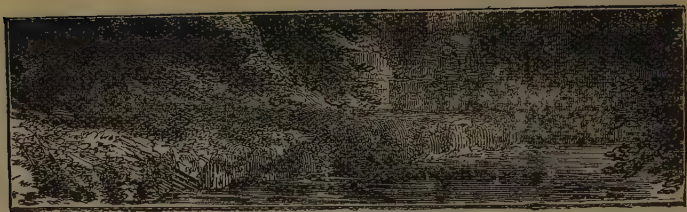
We stopped for a moment on the banks of the stream, and after a little refreshment we filled our gourds with water.

Suddenly the jackal began to scratch up the ground in a marshy spot, and turned up some ill-rounded object, which Jack brought to me. To my surprise, I found that this shapeless mass was a land-tortoise of the smallest kind, and not much bigger than half of an ordinary apple.

I explained to my children that these animals loved to live in marshy places and fresh water. "They are sometimes kept in gardens," I added, "where they eat a good deal of green stuff, certainly, but they also devour a quantity of snails and other insects."

"We had better take some home to mother, I think," said Jack.

The children immediately set about in pursuit of these poor animals, and they soon found half a dozen, which I put in my game bag.



CHAPTER XLII.

The Oasis. — The Bears. — A Desperate Encounter. — The Vultures. — The Condor.



WE continued our route after a short interval of rest. What was our surprise and joy when, on leaving these sterile plains, we saw stretched out before us a beautiful valley, covered with thick herbage, and interspersed with groups of trees. A pleasant freshness, induced by the great river and its tributaries, tempered the heat of the sun.

We unanimously called this valley the Oasis of the Savannah. We could perceive at intervals herds of buffalo and antelope feeding quietly; but as soon as they became aware of the neighbourhood of our dogs which kept a hundred or two hundred paces in advance, they fled, and dispersed like dust before the wind.

The oasis merged insensibly into the base of the hill on which we had made our first halt. We directed our steps towards the Jackal Grotto, which was large enough to contain us all. We were only about a gun-shot distance from our destination, when I stopped with Jack and Fritz to cut two branches and a thick stick, which they wished to substitute for their palm branches they were wearing over their shoulders.

Ernest went on in front, followed by one of the dogs, towards the Jackal Grotto, where I believe he wished to arrive as quickly as possible, so as to sit in the shade. Suddenly we heard him utter loud cries of terror. We relinquished our work and ran to his assistance, when we met him coming towards us as pale as death and without a hat. He threw himself into my arms, trembling. "A bear," he cried, in an agitated voice; "a bear, and he is close behind me!"

Now was the time for me to display courage and firmness. I immediately made ready my guns, and advanced towards the enemy, which our dogs had already gone forward to encounter. But scarcely had I

discovered one bear about fifty paces off, than I perceived another coming out of the grotto.

These two formidable animals came forward to meet us. There was no time to retire. Fritz and I both stood firm, Jack and Ernest kept timidly behind us. Our first discharge was without effect. I missed my aim altogether, and Fritz had only slightly wounded one of the bears. They both rose on their hind legs and advanced towards us with extended claws. Meanwhile we hastily reloaded our guns and awaited a favourable moment to discharge them. Only the fear of wounding our faithful dogs, which were hanging round the flanks of their enemies, prevented us from firing. Then all the rage of the bears was turned against the dogs, which, covered with blood and severely wounded, seemed on the point of succumbing to their foes.

In this extremity I encouraged Fritz to advance nearer. We fired, and I broke the jaw of one enemy, while Fritz smashed a shoulder of the other. This gave the advantage to our dogs. Without being intimidated by the terrible cries of rage and pain uttered by the bears, they succeeded in overturning one, and while they were holding him down, I was fortunate enough to despatch him with one of the pistols. At the same moment Fritz advanced to the other, and was lucky enough to send a bullet through his head. The bear fell dead at his feet.

"Thank Heaven," I cried, seeing them both roll over in the dust. "We have escaped a great danger. Let us praise God who has delivered us from it."

After assuring ourselves that the bears could no longer do us any harm, we approached to examine them more at leisure. We heard Jack cry "Victory," and he and Ernest soon arrived on the field of battle, the latter not having quite recovered from his fright.

I asked Ernest why he had gone on in front so quickly to the Bears' Grotto, for that was the name we now gave it.

"Ah," he replied in a shaking voice; "I wanted to frighten Jack a little by growling like a bear as he approached the grotto. I was far from thinking that God would punish me by sending these two terrible animals after me."

"That will teach you, my son," I replied, "not to play practical jokes again. You have been the first one punished by the very hoax you meditated, and in giving your brother Jack a fright you might have done him much more real injury than fortunately has befallen you by real danger."

"But how does it happen," said Jack, "that bears live in such a warm climate as this? To judge by their skins one would think they were intended for cold countries."

"I cannot quite explain the reason of it," I exclaimed; "but perhaps



these bears may be of a particular species. I do not know enough of natural history to tell you whether they belong to the European or the American sort, and I know they have found them even in Thibet."

The boys enchanted with the success of our encounter, sat down upon their fallen foes, and examined their powerful teeth and terrible claws. They admired the strength and power of their limbs, their enormous

bulk, and their beautiful glossy hair. In examining their skin closely, I fancied that they might perhaps be that species of bear which Captain Clarke and his followers encountered while descending the north-west coast of America.

"But what are we to do with these animals?" I said, after a pause.

"I think," said Fritz, "we ought to skin them for the sake of their



fur. Their skins will be very nice to lie down upon after a long journey."

"It is time now," said I, "to think of returning. To-morrow we can come back here and reclaim our prey when we have the cart, for I do not think that you will care to pass the night here."

My wife and Frank received us with every token of joy. I for one was very glad to see that the supper was ready, and that the necessary

wood to replenish the fire during the night had already been heaped up around the tent, so that we should have nothing to do but just cast it on the embers.

During supper we related our exploits to our astonished auditors, and when we had concluded our narrative, we promised that they should accompany us next day to the Bears' Grotto, to see what would be best to do with the animals, and whether it would not be better to cut them up like the peccaries, and salt and smoke them on the spot.

My wife in her turn now gave us a full account of her occupations during the day, which had been not less profitable than ours. She had been occupied in collecting the water in the bamboo conduits, and had constructed quite a little reservoir about twenty paces from the tent. At the foot of the rock she had discovered a kind of loam, very fine and white, which, from the sample she submitted to me, I recognised as pipeclay. This I fancied we could work up into china clay, and make certain porcelain utensils. She had also made a hearth with this clay and some fragments of rock. The rest of the day she had occupied herself in transporting, with the assistance of the draught animals, a quantity of stones, and stakes, and immense bamboos, which we had cut to strengthen the palisade. I thanked her for all the trouble she had taken during our absence to spare us fatigue and time. I lit the bivouac fires, and placed upon a log two bowls of the pipeclay which I was very anxious to try. The dogs, whose wounds my wife had washed and dressed, lay down before the fire, and we retired into the tent, where a sweet sleep repaid us for all the fatigue we had undergone.

I awoke at daybreak, but I was very unwilling to get up, and I had to make a great effort to rise. My family did not stir for some time after. First of all I searched the wood ashes for the pipeclay which I had put down the evening before. I found it very much baked, and I saw that we should be able to make great use of it if we possessed sufficient skill in the mixing of the clay. After our morning prayer and breakfast, I harnessed the buffalo and the bull, and we set out for the cavern where we had encountered the bears.

We had advanced within sight of the spot, when Fritz, who was marching in advance, exclaimed, "Make haste if you wish to arrive in time to see *such* a covey of turkeys, which have most likely come over here to assist at the funeral rites of the two bears, but they seem to have placed a sentinel on each side of the entrance of the grotto, so as to prevent our approaching too closely."

We all hastened forward, and when we had rejoined Fritz, we perceived an immense bird, whose head was covered with a short tuft, the upper part of its long beak was pointed and curved downwards; around its red and bare-looking neck was a collar of feathers. Its body plumes

were of a dark brown colour, its feet were armed with formidable claws. The other birds bore a resemblance to turkey-cocks by their black feathers, and red naked necks. The great bird came to the entrance of the grotto from time to time, but he never remained there long, because he was always followed by a feathered crowd, and he was obliged to turn and drive them away. Holding the dogs in leash, we stood for some time gazing upon this singular spectacle, when we became aware of a great noise caused by the rapid beating of wings overhead. We looked up and saw an enormous bird flying towards the grotto, but at the same moment a ball from Fritz's gun whistled through the air and the bird fell dead, striking against the rocks as it fell.

Up to this time we had remained passive spectators of the scene, but now cries resounded from all sides. The dogs which we let loose dashed towards the grotto, and all the birds rose simultaneously into the air. Fritz fired his pistol at the great bird with the white collar, but he rose in majestic flight, unharmed, and wended his way towards the distant blue mountains, and soon disappeared from our sight.

Nothing remained upon the field of battle but the magnificent bird which Fritz had shot, and one of the supposed turkeys, which had been crushed by the fall of this monster of the air.

"These are capital guardians of the dead, these birds, I must say," exclaimed Fritz; "if we had come but one day later there would have been nothing left of our bears. These birds are living sepulchres which devour corpses more quickly even than graves can do."

I entered the grotto with some precaution. The birds of prey had only torn out the eyes of the bear within, but I could perceive that had not the thick screen of brambles interfered, but very little of the animal would have been left.

We afterwards examined our birds, the unpleasant odour of which did not leave us long in doubt as to what species they belonged. My wife was unwillingly obliged to give up the idea of possessing a turkey-cock.

"But what do you think this bird can be?" she said.

"It is only a vulture," I replied, "and if I do not mistake it is the urubu of Brazil."

"Oh," said my wife, "that will disgust me for ever with all turkey-cocks and hens."

"I have no doubt it will be some time before you have any occasion to eat these birds," I replied, "but, all the same, turkeys are not very particular about eating the flesh of dead animals."

"There, that is quite enough," said my wife; "if you go on so you will finish by upsetting me altogether. You may do whatever you like with this horrible vulture."

"Mamma," said Jack, "we are going to pluck his feathers out as we did to the other large bird."

"But you had better first see," I said, "to what species he belongs."

"It is a condor, papa," said Jack; "the spread of his wings is six feet across."

"Yes, of your feet, I have no doubt, my boy."



THE GRIFFIN VULTURE.

"No, no," he replied, "just the proper feet. I measured him with my gun, which is four feet long."

After this conversation we unloaded the cart, and erected the tent with its back towards the grotto. While sounding a crack in the rock, with the bamboo rod, I set some stones rolling about, beneath which I discovered some plates of talc, a transparent stone mingled with threads of asbestos, a sort of amianthus, known under the name of incombustible

linen. I was charmed with this discovery, which I hoped to make use of later.

We suspended our bear by the fore legs to a bamboo pole, and then Fritz and I set about skinning it. Meanwhile my wife, Ernest and Frank made up the hearth, and lit the fire.

I had a good deal of trouble to raise up the bear-skin, as the boys wished above all things to have the skin with the claws and jaws attached.



"But what are you going to do with the head?" I asked.

"We are going to use it for a masquerade, such as we saw at Rome, at Easter time," said Jack.

"Or," said Fritz, "we might very easily use the skin of the bear's head as a helmet, after the mode of the Otaheitans and the inhabitants of the Sandwich Islands; it would be useful if we ever encountered savages."

"I know something still better," said Ernest. "According to the example of the ancient Germans, we ought to make a fighting costume

out of the bear-skins, and wear them as Hercules did the skin of the Nemean lion, or we might make the skull of the bear into a helmet, to frighten our enemies."

"It might be as well," said I, "to have the skin to dispose of in the first instance, and I think on this occasion we must be contented to place our trophy in our museum."

Just then my wife came to call us to dinner. After our repast I told Ernest and Fritz to go in search of the ostrich's eggs which we had buried in the sand. They brought them back, and I found them so cold that I wished to be certain before proceeding further, whether the chickens were dead or alive.

Seeing that the water in the saucepan was still warm, I told Jack to bring it to me.

"The water," he said; "are you going to cook the eggs to resuscitate the chickens?"

"Of course not," said his mother; "your father only wishes to give them a bath."

"And what is he going to do that for?" said Jack.

"Because if he plunge one egg into a vessel full of water, and the egg move of itself, would not you conclude that the chicken is alive?"

"Ah! I understand," said Jack; "but why do you use warm water for that purpose?"

"Why do you never think before you speak, my friend? Cold water of course would freeze the chicken as much as hot water would boil it."

The experiment was made. The eggs remained motionless. The children, being disappointed, immediately wanted to break the shells, but I would not permit them.

"If we do not have chickens from the eggs," I said, "let us at any rate make cups and bowls from the shells. Let us break them properly as we did the calabashes."

"But papa," said Fritz, "don't you remember that the calabashes were soft, and the cord cut through them without any trouble; but these eggs are as hard as stones."

"Well, my boy, just you run and fetch some vinegar and some cotton thread."

"You are speaking in riddles, papa."

"Listen," I replied. "By means of the thread we are enabled to absorb a little of the vinegar. The thread then applied to the centre of the egg must be re-wetted from time to time with the vinegar. The egg will then separate as cleanly as if cut by a knife."



CHAPTER XLIII.

Preparing the Bears' Meat.—Cutting the Ostrich Eggs.—Talc.—A Discovery.—The Boys' Return.—Antelope Hunting.—The Eagle and the Rabbits.—The Bee Eater.—Attacked by the Bees.



N entire day was still required for the preparation of the flesh of the two bears. Having carefully removed the hides, I cut off the hams as well as I could; and as I had understood from certain *gourmands* that the paws were the most delicate meat, we determined to assure ourselves on this point, and put them by for that purpose. The rest of the flesh was cut up in long strips, wherever possible about an inch thick, according to the East Indian practice, and the whole was then salted and exposed to a thick smoke. We collected the fat most carefully, and I gave it to my wife, that she might melt it down and preserve it for use, knowing that it would be very useful in cooking; and besides, we should be able to eat it spread like fresh butter upon our bread.

We melted down this fat with that of the peccaries we had previously smoked. When it was clarified we found that we had nearly a hundred pounds weight of it, and we stowed it all away in small bamboo casks, which we sealed up hermetically, having first let the lard cool, so that it would keep better and bear transport more easily. We afterwards, with the assistance of our oxen, dragged the refuse of the bears to a long distance, and abandoned it to the birds of prey, which very soon assembled in crowds to the banquet, and, assisted by numerous insects, succeeded so well in clearing off all the flesh that remained, that we were enabled to place in our museum of natural history two perfectly clean skulls, blanched by the action of the sun.

Afterwards, the hides, having been stretched in the sun for two days,

were well washed, rubbed with cinders, and dried anew. We afterwards scraped them with our knives to render them more supple, without making use of the Greenland method; for it is stated that the natives of that country chew the skins of the sea-dogs between their teeth in order to make them supple.



We then prepared the condor and the urubu of Brazil, so as to be able to stuff them in such a way that they would keep for some little time; and here some pepper came to our assistance, with a mixture of salt, to sprinkle upon

the skins, and on the cotton with which we stuffed them, postponing till a future time the preparation of the limbs, the artificial eyes, and the general arrangement.

As our work was now approaching its termination, and there was

nothing more very pressing for us to do, my sons became rather restless, and got so impatient that I was obliged, somewhat against my will, to open up a vast field for their energies. I suggested to them that they should make an excursion without me across the savannah, either to shoot some birds of prey or to make some new discoveries. This proposition gave the liveliest satisfaction to the three lads. As for Ernest, after a moment's reflection, he expressed a desire to remain with us, which request I did not refuse, since it was a party of pleasure. On the other hand, Frank, whom I should have preferred to have retained with me, requested so earnestly to be allowed to go, that I found it impossible to refuse him.

So Fritz, Jack, and Frank went off at once to saddle their steeds, which were grazing close by, on the edge of a little stream. Ernest, having assisted them to mount, wished them a pleasant journey and agreeable and useful discoveries.

"In fact," I remarked as they rode away, "it is a very good thing for young people to run about a little with the object of acquiring the experience and energy necessary to depend upon themselves, should it please Providence to deprive them of their parents at an early age. Besides, I have a very good opinion of Fritz's courage and cleverness, and do not hesitate to put him in charge of his two brothers. They are all three well mounted, well armed, and accompanied by two formidable dogs, and they have already proved their courage and presence of mind. Heaven protect them," I added in conclusion. "The Providence which vouchsafed to restore the sons of Jacob to their father will also deign to guide mine in the desert."

We re-entered the grotto, and resumed our tasks, that is, my wife and I did; for Ernest was deeply engaged in cutting a line round one of the ostrich's eggs with the thread which he had steeped in vinegar, which he kept moistening until the shell parted. Suddenly he cried out, "Oh, papa, the shell is broken, but the egg is entire inside."

"Have patience," I said. "If the shell is entirely cut through, the egg must of necessity come out. You are always too ready to call out for assistance in what is really very easy."

"Oh, now I understand the difficulty," replied Ernest. "There is still a pellicle which is both supple and firm as parchment, which retains the egg within it, which must be cut with a knife."

"Well thought of," I said; "but you have already broken and eaten a sufficient number of hens' and other eggs to have remembered this pellicle, which you ought to have expected to find much thicker in the ostrich eggs than in the others, in proportion to their size."

I then gave my pocket-knife to my son, and when he had cut this parchment pellicle, the egg immediately separated into two equal parts.

The interior had no bad odour about it, and we found a young dead ostrich in it : a small unformed animal of a yellowish colour, that still had its eyes shut ; and it was evident that it required ten or twelve days, more hatching. We left it in its shell, and put it aside to show to the young hunters when they returned.



THE SABLE ANTELOPE.

Meantime I commenced a very important piece of work in which Ernest rendered me very valuable assistance. I had previously discovered that the grotto concealed talc, and I occupied myself by detaching a block of this precious mineral from the rock, about two feet

square. It was almost embedded in the asbestos; nevertheless by perseverance I succeeded in extracting some tablets about the thickness of ordinary glass. We were quite overjoyed at the sight of this treasure, and even my wife, who is usually self-contained, could not repress her satisfaction at a discovery by the aid of which we should be able to replace our window panes, of which we were in great want.

Towards evening, as we were sitting round the fire while my wife was preparing supper, we began to talk, pending the return of our young adventurers.

"Papa," said Ernest, "we might very well live here *à la* Robinson Crusoe. The cavern is very commodious, and we can easily make it fit for our habitation."

"No doubt," I replied; "and it will be also very desirable to take some measures for our safety; for already it has been visited by very dangerous guests, which it is very essential to keep at a distance. This grotto will be of great importance to us because of the discovery of the talc; but we must take possession of it in proper form, so that we may be able to come here always without fear."

"In that case," said Ernest, "we must plant across the entrance several rows of trees, which combine flexibility with rapid growth, and will so interlace that in a few years they will form an impenetrable wall. We shall be able to enter by means of a ladder, which we can draw up after us when we please, and thus we shall ensure perfect safety in case of an attack."

"That is a capital idea, my young engineer, and no doubt in time it will be all very well when your trees have grown; but what do you intend to call your citadel? Fort Ernest, no doubt, in memory of your last exploit."

"Oh, don't papa, please. It might very well be called Fort Bruin, which appears to me more applicable and more imposing."

"All that is very well in theory," I said, "and we can think it over at our leisure; but you must remember that a plan is really of no practical use unless you see your way to the execution of it."

As I was speaking we heard the sounds of galloping behind us, and we soon recognised our young hunters, who came back to head quarters at a trot, uttering joyous and triumphal cries.

The three riders quickly dismounted, hobbled their steeds by the forelegs, and having unsaddled them, allowed them to graze at leisure, while they themselves advanced towards us with a grave assumption of importance, which was very comic.

Jack and Frank had each a species of kid slung round his neck. The legs joined together after the manner of the golden fleece, and the continual movement of the bodies gave them the appearance of being alive.

of the surrounding country, and in this way we discovered a herd of quadrupeds which we thought were goats, antelopes, or gazelles. We immediately conceived the idea of driving them towards our habitation, and we set about doing so, having first taken the precaution to keep the dogs in leash, as experience had taught us that wild animals are more afraid of dogs than of us."

"We then took up three different positions. Frank went along by the river; Jack occupied the centre; while I, mounted upon the onagra, tried to drive in the game when it attempted to stray out into the plain. At first we advanced with great caution, and if any had escaped it would not have been our fault. By degrees the herd began to get alarmed. One of them raised its head, another stretched its neck and pricked up its ears, another, which was lying down on the grass, suddenly jumped up; the young ones pressed close against their mothers; all of them were preparing for flight. But at a pre-arranged signal we let go all three dogs at the same time, while we galloped as hard as we could towards the herd, which was forced to escape through the narrow entrance of the defile.

"Some of them attempted to escape by rushing between us; but our dogs worked so well, that in a little time the antelopes had dispersed behind the rocks which enclose our habitation. We then ceased pursuing them and called in the dogs; but we had a good deal of trouble to compel them to abandon the chase.

"Our new captives were of different species, amongst which I believe I noticed the blue buck, which has become so rare at the Cape of Good Hope, as I have read lately.

"It now became necessary to secure our prisoners, and we thought of several different ways of doing so. Jack proposed to tie one of the dogs at the entrance, with a good length of cord to prevent the escape of the deer; but we considered that perhaps he might break away, or if he did not, he might be devoured at his post by jackals, so we gave up that idea.

"Frank suggested modestly, that we should construct a trap composed of a loaded gun and a cord, so that if any of the animals attempted to escape, they would tread upon the string and explode the gun, the noise of which would terrify them. But this battery presented quite as many difficulties as did the dog-lying suggestion. At length it occurred to me that it would be a good plan to extend a cord across the defile, and to tie upon it the ostrich feathers which we wore in our hats, and the pieces of rag with which we cleaned our guns. These objects, agitated by the wind which rushes through the opening in the hills, would, in my opinion, suffice to send back any of our light-footed captives which might feel inclined to try to escape."

"Well thought of, Fritz," I exclaimed; "at least your stratagem will serve very well for the day, and during the night the howling of the jackals will no doubt keep the timid herd within the prison-boundary. But how did you happen to think of such a plan as that you have adopted?"

"I read it in the account of Levaillant's voyage to the Cape of Good Hope. He mentions that stratagem as being employed by the Hottentots, to retain in their possession the antelope which they had secured."

"Very well done," I said; "now you see how your reading comes of service sometimes, when you least expect it to be of use. You never would have thought, for instance, that one day you would have been surrounding antelopes and gazelles in a desert of the new world. But how did you come possessed of those two rabbits? and what do you wish to do with them? These animals increase very rapidly, and commit too many depredations for us to put them into our farin-yard."

"I intended them," replied Fritz; "to occupy one of the two islands which we have at our disposal. Shark Island, for example, where we can feed them up a little, and they will soon furnish us with excellent food as well as with skins for our hats, for the rat skins will not last for ever, and we cannot expect Ernest to supply us periodically with animals as he had done lately."

"Capital, Fritz," I said, "that is an excellent plan, and I will leave it to you alone to carry out, as your reward. But now tell me when and how you managed to secure these rabbits."

"We encountered a number of them as we were returning; but neither the skill of our dogs nor the speed of our steeds would have been of any assistance to us in taking them, for at the very least alarm they all rushed into their burrows. So I then had recourse to my eagle, which very quickly flew down amongst them and held them so fascinated by fear, that I was enabled to approach and actually secure two of them with my hands. But the eagle was not going to forget his own share, for he seized another, and tore it to pieces on the spot."

"I can quite believe it," I replied; "for the partridge also will stop before the sportsman, and will permit itself to be enveloped in a net, if it perceive some little distance a hawk or a falcon overhead."

"Papa," said Jack; "cannot Frank and I also tell you our adventures? I am very anxious to do so, for I am sure it is worth your attention."

"I have no doubt, whatever, on the subject," I said; "that must necessarily be the case respecting the adventures of a set of headstrong boys who roam about the world; but they are not always happy

adventures ; but very well, go on, and tell me how you have become possessed of these two pretty little animals which you were carrying on your shoulders."

"I will begin, papa, at once, and go as fast as our steeds did, and be as brief as Fritz. While he was some little distance off hunting the rabbits, we kept quietly advancing, thinking that we should easily rejoin him. In a few moments our dogs began to cast backwards and forwards, and suddenly hurried off in pursuit of two animals about the size of hares, which darted away with incredible swiftness. We followed them at a gallop, and our dogs acted so well, that before long we overtook the fugitives, for in less than a quarter of an hour they were exhausted, and fell down panting and almost dead. We dismounted, took the dogs off them, and tied them by the feet in a moment, and then we perceived that what we had thought were hares, were young fawns."

"For my part," I said, interrupting, "I believe that they are two more young antelopes ; but they are not on that account the less welcome."

"Oh, oh," said Jack ; "this is getting interesting, and may be called a happy hunt, I think, papa."

"Our steeds certainly did their duty well, my buffalo in particular is an indefatigable runner. When we had washed the delicate limbs of our pretty little captives with a little palm-wine, which appeared to strengthen them very much, we placed them upon our shoulders, and continued our way to join Fritz. You can imagine how he opened his eyes when he saw our beautiful captives. But that is not all. While we were quietly returning, we saw at some distance from us—a bird, which appeared to induce us to follow him by his singular cry. He got up when we approached him, then went a little farther off, and commenced his antics over again, so that we began to think that he had some object in view, or else that he intended to play some trick upon us."

"Frank was of the first opinion, and said very seriously, that he had no doubt that it was some enchanted prince, who wished us to deliver him. 'Wait,' he said, 'and you will see me break the charm.'

"'Nonsense,' I replied, while Fritz began to laugh ; but at the same time reminded me that my gun was loaded with ball, and that I should probably lose my shot. 'It will be very much better,' he said, 'to follow the bird and see where he will lead us ; but it appears to me that this is the honey-guide bird, at least its form and appearance generally is very like our cuckoo at home.'

"This advice appeared to me very reasonable, and so we followed the bird with more precaution. It now no longer stopped for us,

nor did it continue to sing. As we approached it, we found close by a bees' nest in the ground; the insects were going out and coming in, buzzing about just as they would in a hive. A great council of war was now held to discuss the best means of attacking this subterraneous fortress with success. Frank wished to excuse himself from taking any part in it as he had not forgotten his adventure with the bees at Falcon's Nest. Fritz pretended that in his character of general-in-chief, he was only bound to direct the operations, and advised me to burn some



THE HONEY EATER.

matches at the entrance of the nest, so as to suffocate the bees. Accordingly, I bravely set about to execute his orders. But scarcely had I set fire to the matches, when a most horrible buzzing arose, and the bees came out by thousands, quite darkening the air, and covering me from head to foot.

"To add to this misfortune, those bees which were coming in from the fields also joined with their companions, and assailed me on all

sides, attached themselves to my hair, to my cheeks, to my forehead and nose, and I had only time to jump upon my steed and rush away as fast as ever I could. Such, my dear father, is the cause of the honourable scars which you now behold."

"Well," I replied, "at any rate, you displayed a great deal of courage, if you did not show much prudence. Go now, and ask your mother to apply some cooling substance to your face, which will relieve the pain, and reduce the inflammation."

We thought it was now time to give our young antelopes a little liberty, and I made for the purpose of their removal a large wicker basket, which I covered over with cloth, and suspended to the branch of a tree, so that they should not be exposed to any danger. The antelopes were really most graceful animals, about ten or twelve inches high, the male had little black polished horns, and his legs were most particularly delicate.

All this led me to think of the safety of our little colony. I then suggested, not only to guard against a surprise from the side of the hills, but also to erect on Shark Island a fortress in which our two cannon should be mounted, and which, commanding the country in the direction of Felsenheim, would make a very good place of refuge.

After supper we lighted our torches and our fire to keep off wild beasts, as well as to continue the smoking of the bears' flesh without interruption.

Afterwards, we all joined in evening prayer, and retired to rest to enjoy a peaceful sleep.





CHAPTER XLIV.

An Excursion.—Euphorbia Gum.—Capture of another Ostrich.—Taming the Captive
—The Bears' Cavern.—Felsenheim again.



EXT morning I woke my sons at daybreak, for it was necessary to think of making preparations for our departure. We had almost finished our work, the bears' flesh had been smoked, the fat had been packed into the casks, and it would have been very foolish indeed to have allowed ourselves to be surprised by the rainy season, far from home, and in want of nearly all necessities or comforts.

On the other hand I did not wish to abandon either the ostrich eggs or the euphorbia gum, which had been escaping from the cuts I had made in the stem of the plant, and if we hurried we should be able to accomplish all our desires.

We therefore laid ourselves out fairly on this new course after we had provided what we thought necessary. Fritz gave up the onagra to me, taking the young foal to his own use. Jack and Frank mounted their usual steeds. Ernest remained with his mother, to whom he could be much more useful than Frank. We left our two young dogs with them, and our little cavalcade set out.

We followed the direction of the green valley, in which we found memories at every step; here was the place we had met the bear, here was the tortoise marsh, and the place where we had seen the supposed Arabs. We had also named the rock from which Fritz had discovered the ostriches, which he had first taken for a caravan of Bedouins.

Jack and Frank went on before us at a gallop, and I let them go, because the plain was so level that I could not easily lose sight of them, while I stopped with Fritz to collect the gum which had exuded from the euphorbia, and which, under the action of the sun, had already formed

into small solid lumps. We collected a great quantity, for I had made quite a number of incisions in the plants.

"This gum," I said to Fritz, "is a most subtle poison. At the Cape of Good Hope, the natives use it to poison the springs at which the wild animals assemble to quench their thirst, and this is all the more easy as the plant has neither taste nor smell, and cannot give the water any flavour whatever."

"But," replied Fritz, "domestic animals and men run a risk of drinking it as well as the wild beasts."

"No doubt; so this resource ought always to be looked upon as very dangerous, though the colonists take precautions against any serious injury. They cover over the natural spring with large stones, and dig at the side of it a small pond, which they leave uncovered, and into which they throw the poisonous plant. Besides, they never permit their herds to drink from an unknown spring before they have most carefully examined the water, and searched for any traces of the euphorbia, or whether a light mist hangs over the water. If they perceive either of these indications they go farther on; sometimes the inhabitants lose part of their flocks, but they are well repaid by the skins of the tigers, lions, etc., etc., which they find dead by the springs. It is said that the Hottentots eat the flesh of the animals thus poisoned, having first carefully thrown away the entrails."

"But, father, what is the use of our collecting a quantity of this poison?"

"In case of absolute necessity, I intend to use it against the monkeys if they continue to ravage our plantations. I can also use it to keep away insects, and to preserve the skins of the birds or quadrupeds which we may stuff. This poison is equally useful as medicine, and can be used in place of cantharides, which is a species of fly with brilliant green wings, and of which blisters are made. But whatever may be the advantages attached to the cultivation of euphorbia, I must take very great care how we acclimatize such a dangerous plant in the vicinity of our home."

"As soon as we had collected a quantity of the plants, we set out at a quick trot to rejoin the other two riders, who had advanced a long way into the meadow, and so far had they gone, that they were already beyond the ostrich's nest, of which they had taken no notice, no doubt with the intention of flushing these birds on their return, and chasing them in our direction. We hoped that amongst the number we should find some males, because they generally assist the females in the hatching. It is even stated that several females lay in the same nest, and they afterwards hatch their eggs in common.

Fritz, who was very anxious to take an ostrich alive this time, got his

eagle ready, and tied up its beak. We exchanged steeds, so that we could pursue the fugitives with greater speed, and we separated one from the other, and waited with great impatience till some of the birds chose to get up from the nest. Before very long, we saw here and there flying masses darting through the woods. At length, four magnificent ostriches rose, and came towards us at a most tremendous pace, so that we supposed they heard our young cavaliers galloping behind them, and as we remained so motionless they were not afraid of us.

We very soon recognised the male bird, which we were particularly anxious to capture, because he was bigger and more beautiful than the female. He came on in front, and approached almost within pistol-shot. Immediately I threw my ball-sling, but as I was not very expert in this sort of exercise, instead of catching round his legs as I had intended, the sling twined round his body and only pressed his wings down, but with such effect that for a few seconds fright or terror accelerated his course and made him take another direction.

The females fled immediately, and we let them go, for we were particularly anxious to catch the male bird, which was much more important, and Jack and Frank were coming up in time to cut off his retreat. Fritz then, without loss of time, let fly his eagle, which finding his beak tied up did not know what he was about, and kept flying over the ostrich's head, and did not exactly attack the bird, but, nevertheless, the presence of his new enemy rather distracted the poor animal, which kept running hither and thither without any definite object. At last the eagle plunged down and gave him such a tremendous blow with its wings that the ostrich was almost stunned, and staggered as if about to fall. Then Jack threw his ball-sling around the legs of the animal, and in an instant he was a captive. With a loud "hurrah" we hastened up to take off the eagle and the dogs, and to assure ourselves of his capture before he should be able to kick off his bonds.

His struggles and kicks were so violent that we were quite afraid to approach him. It is true we possessed means of overcoming him, but they were all fraught with more or less danger towards the beautiful bird, which we wished to make a prisoner without wounding. At length it occurred to me to throw my pocket handkerchief over his head, and to fasten it as lightly as we could round his neck. Immediately the bird was deprived of light he ceased to struggle, and the victory was ours. I passed round his body a long belt of the sea-dog's skin, and to each side I attached two other straps to serve as guides. We also tied a thick cord round his legs sufficiently loose to permit his walking, but tight enough to prevent his running away.

"I very much doubt," said Fritz, "whether we shall ever tame this great bird, or if he will be any use to us."

"Are you not aware," I replied, "that Indians tame elephants even?"

"Yes, I know they do so, by having a wild elephant between two tame ones after having tied down his trunk, so that he is obliged to obey their movements whether he will or not, and if he be disobedient his neighbours chastise him with their trunks, and two drivers armed with sharp sticks assist them to punish him if he gets very restive."

"Then we ought to possess two tame ostriches if we wish to tame this one, for I do not think that either Fritz or myself are tall enough to supply their places."

"Do be serious if you please," I said, "it is not absolutely necessary



that there should be two ostriches ; the young bull and the buffalo will serve the purpose I think, and Jack and Frank, each armed with a whip, will take the place of the elephant drivers most satisfactorily."

The boys jumped for joy, and cried out, "That is excellent, and cannot fail to succeed."

I immediately made all necessary arrangements to carry out this idea. I added to the straps, with which I had already tied the ostrich, others, by which I attached him tightly to the horns of "Sturm" and

"Brummer." I placed the boys on the saddles, and after having taken the handkerchief from the bird's eyes, I retired to a little distance to observe the result.

The ostrich remained for a short time perfectly motionless as if bewildered by the sudden return of light; he then bounded up quickly, and seeing nothing in front, attempted to escape, but brought up suddenly by the straps, he fell upon his knees. He then got up again, but more cautiously, and endeavoured, though in vain, to escape. Then he attempted to fly but his wings were tied down, and then exerting all his force, he jumped violently to the right and left, but his neighbours did not stir an inch, and at last he fell down quite discouraged. A couple of blows of the whip brought him on his feet again; and appearing to understand that resistance was quite useless, he made up his mind to walk alongside his companions, and at length broke into a gallop with them, amidst the hurrahs of the riders. Animated by their cries he redoubled his speed, but the two riders very prudently would not permit this, and wearied him by short marches and counter-marches, until they compelled him to adopt a more reasonable pace.

As soon as we saw them getting on so comfortably, we left them to go alone; and telling the boys to wait for us by the Arab's Tower, Fritz and I proceeded towards the ostrich's nest.

I had taken care to provide everything that I thought would be necessary to transport the eggs homeward without accident. We very soon reached the nest, not only from having taken observations of its position, but also because the sitting bird arose from it as we approached. She fled so quickly that pursuing her was quite out of the question; but we were very glad to see that she was there, because it assured us the nest was not deserted, and we now hoped to find some little chickens alive. I took ten of the eggs from the nest, and carefully wrapped them up in cotton. We left the others in the hope that the mother would come back to hatch them.

I could not discover anything to warrant the statement made by some naturalists, that the ostrich lays eggs outside the nest to serve as nourishment to the young birds within; besides, it is probable that eggs thus exposed to the heat of the sun would very soon get shrivelled up or become rotten.

We took the greatest care to pack our fragile treasures on my steed's back, and then, without losing time, we rejoined the boys. All then proceeded without stopping through the green valley, and arrived safely at the Bears' Grotto.

It would be difficult to give you an idea of the astonishment of my wife and Ernest at the sight of our superb capture. The former was some time before she could speak. I gave her a circumstantial account

of the capture of the ostrich, and Ernest, who had listened with great attention exclaimed in a mortified tone,—

“I am never with you when you do any great things.”

“You forget, my dear Ernest,” said I, “that you do not care either for the fatigue or for the sight of our sporting expeditions, and you cannot have everything. Fritz and Jack surpass you, it is true, in strength and



agility, but you, on the other hand, are superior to them in languages and in natural history. You have frequently been of the greatest use to us in our expeditions in consequence of your attainments; and should a strange vessel arrive on the coast, you would act as interpreter; so you see that you have no need to trouble yourself.”

As it was already too late to continue our journey, we untied the bull and the buffalo, and fastened the ostrich firmly between two trees. The remainder of the day was passed in making preparations for our departure and in packing up the treasures we had collected.

We left early the next morning, after a frugal breakfast; but it was not without much trouble that we compelled the ostrich to take his place

in the cavalcade as on the previous day, and we were obliged to blind-fold him. When he was safely tied between his two guardians, I attached them with a long cord to our cart, in which my wife was seated in the midst of our supplies. Ernest, mounted upon the inoffensive cow, led the way, and we thus formed a well-organized, if somewhat extraordinary, caravan.

We halted at the entrance of the defile, where the boys wished to stop to remove the ostrich plumes which they had hung there to frighten the gazelles and antelopes. I also wished to gather some pipe-clay, and I found some vanilla in the same place. I could not well mistake this plant, with its long narrow leaves and brown pods, its balsamic smell, its little black seeds, and, finally, by its immense yellow flowers, which decorate the flexible stem. Before leaving, I wished to close up the passage with bamboo canes, so as to protect us from the invasions of those animals which could not climb. To render it as inaccessible as possible, we interlaced dry branches with the bamboos; and at length, having carefully eradicated all traces of our footsteps, we sprinkled fine sand all around, so that we should be able to see if our habitation had had any visitor from outside, or whether any had escaped from within.

When we had taken all these precautions, we hurried on as quickly as possible to reach Waldegg before night-fall, if we could manage to do so.

Passing Sugar Top, we took up our peccary flesh, which we found well smoked in the hut. We also collected a number of sugar-canes in the neighbourhood, and immediately continued our journey, though the moon, no doubt, would have been of assistance to us had we stayed out; but in these climates it is neither safe nor prudent to travel during the night.

It was quite late, and we were very tired, when we reached home. We were obliged to calm the excitement of the fowls, which had gone to roost, and which, frightened at our approach, made anything but a welcome noise. Having provided as usual for the safety of the ostrich and our steeds, we took a light supper and went to bed. We slept soundly till the following day.

When we got up we were delighted to see that our sitting hen had hatched some chickens, and also the eggs which Jack had brought home from the desert. The hen led them all about together, and my wife was so charmed with the little turkeys that she wished to carry them to Felsenheim. We put them in the rabbits' basket, and placed the latter in the sack in which we carried the tortoises.

We had now such a strong wish to return to our dear abode at Felsenheim that, notwithstanding the great heat, we pressed on without any stoppage. We arrived at home in the afternoon quite tired out, and resolved not to make any more expeditions for some time.



CHAPTER XLV.

Education of the Ostrich.—Arranging our Colonies and Gardens.—Riding on the Ostrich.—How we tamed it.—New Harness for the Bird.—Angora Rabbits and New Hats.



OOON after our arrival at Felsenheim, and when we had taken a little necessary repose, my wife, like a good manager as she is, opened the windows, dusted the rooms, and put everything in order. In this she was assisted by her youngest son, while the elder ones helped me in unloading the rich booty which we had brought back.

First of all, the ostrich was tied up under the trees between the two bamboo posts which supported the roof of our house, and by degrees we lengthened the cord which secured him until he was completely tamed, but this was only the prelude to his real education.

We afterwards placed the ostrich eggs in tepid water, and those which appeared to retain any principle of life, were carefully wrapped in cotton, and placed in a stove, which I took care to keep constantly at the same temperature which is indicated on some thermometers as *chaleur de poule*, so that we hatched them after the manner pursued by the Egyptians. Only five of them appeared likely to live, the others had no doubt perished on the way.

The Angora rabbits then had their turn. We installed them on Shark Island, after having combed as much hair out as we could. We made them a burrow with many entrances, and numerous compartments, after which we left them to their own devices, to increase and multiply; but we took care to place at each entrance to the burrow, a number of cards cut out like combs, so that running in and out the rabbits might leave some of their hair behind them. This fur we intended to make up into hats. We moved the two antelopes to the same place, but not without

some regret on our part. We should not have been able to retain them near us without inconvenience, for the dogs would have injured



them. We should, therefore, have been obliged to shut them up, and they would probably have died under those circumstances. In the

middle of the island we built up a sort of shed for their protection, and that they might the more quickly get accustomed to their new place of residence, we took care to add to the food which they would find growing there, some provision which we knew would be most acceptable to them.

Almost all the tortoises which we had brought from the desert had been suffocated on the journey, and I could only put their shells on one side for use in case of necessity. Only two remained alive, and these we transported into the Ducks' Marsh. I had at first thought of putting them into our kitchen garden, where they would very quickly have devoured all the snails and insects; but my wife having judiciously observed that the tortoises were very good judges of lettuce, Jack was commissioned to take them to the borders of the marsh.

As soon as he reached the marsh, he signalled to Fritz to come over as quickly as he could with a bamboo stick. I thought at first that it was merely a question of a raid against the frogs, but the boys very soon returned with a magnificent eel which they had found in one of the nets which Ernest had spread before our departure. The other nets were empty, but were broken at the lower part; so we were of opinion that the great prisoners they had contained had succeeded in recovering their liberty. However, the size of our remaining captive consoled us for the loss of the others. My wife immediately prepared a portion of it for our enjoyment, and the remainder was put by for future use.

The pepper and vanilla shoots were planted at the foot of the little columns of which I have already spoken, so that they might climb like a species of wall-fruit, and ripen quickly in this spot, where the heat was too great for vines. Not having any cocoa, I should be able to use the vanilla immediately; but I nevertheless kept it, in the hope of being able to make it a useful article of commerce. Finally, the smoked flesh of the bears and peccaries was deposited with the small casks of lard in the larder, as in an arsenal, where we could at need obtain our arms to resist the attacks of hunger.

Having brought these very necessary arrangements to a satisfactory conclusion, we soaked the bears' skins in sea-water, and covered them over with heavy stones to prevent them being carried away by the tide, or injured by crabs.

My wife took charge of the little turkeys, and we kept them near the house, so that master Knips and the jackal should not make any anatomical experiments upon them, on which they prided themselves so highly. The condor and the uruba were, at the first step, placed in our museum, until the rainy season would give us leisure to stuff them and fix them alongside the boa-constrictor. We also brought

to our workshop the talc, the asbestos, and the porcelain clay, because these precious materials were not objects of curiosity merely.

I proposed at a favourable opportunity to construct out of the asbestos some incombustible wicks, some window panes from the talc, and various utensils with the porcelain clay. The gum of the euphorbia I took into my own keeping, and wrapped it up in a paper, upon which I wrote the word POISON in large letters, so that none of the boys should mistake it.

The rats' skins gave forth rather an unpleasant smell, so I tied them up together in a parcel, and suspended them from a high tree at some distance from our grotto. In this manner sailors carry asafœtida from Asia, and avoid its exhalations by hoisting it up to the top of the mast.

These arrangements occupied two days, at the end of which, I thought it time to begin sowing the field which I had marked out, and on which all hands must be employed. I must say that this work appeared very laborious. At first we only set about the cultivation of one acre, which we divided into three equal parts, for the corn, the maize, and the barley. The other seeds were sown here and there, because we had remarked that in these climates they produce very much less than those three species of grain I have mentioned. Besides this, we made at the other side of the Jackal River, a plantation of manioc and potatoes, because we thought it only right to have always at hand the means of existence which was so precious, though so very simple.

So long as it had been merely a question of turning up the ground superficially, the work had not appeared very hard; but now that we were obliged to dig deep furrows, we comprehended the full meaning of that severe sentence pronounced against our first parents, "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread." We found we could not work more than four hours a day, two in the morning, and two in the evening.

In the interval of repose, necessitated by the great heat, the poor ostrich suffered a good deal. To tame it, we were obliged to half stupefy it with tobacco smoke, which made it stagger about for some time, and at length fall quite motionless to the earth.

By degrees we lengthened the cord, so that the bird could get up and lie down at pleasure, and even walk around the posts to which it was tied. We took the precaution to place within its reach some gourds, filled with food and water, potatoes, rice, maize, etc., such things as we knew it liked best. We also put down a quantity of gravel, because I recollected that the ostrich liked to swallow a stone occasionally as an aid to its digestion, and this was what gave rise to the popular idea that it swallowed iron.

For three whole days the poor prisoner, apparently very unhappy in the position in which it found itself, would take no food, and became so weak that we began to be afraid that it would not live. Then my wife thought that we should compel it to eat, whether it liked or not, some balls of maize rolled up with butter. At first this treatment did not suit the patient, but by degrees it began to relish the diet, and recovered its strength, while it quite lost its wild habits. Then it ate greedily, and appeared to enjoy the food which it had formerly disdained, so that after having sought to tempt it with dainties, we were obliged to seek means to check its voracity. We even ventured to loosen the beautiful bird from the stakes to which it was tied, and permit it to roam about a little near our house. It was at this period that its education commenced in earnest.



We began by making it carry light burdens, and then others more heavy. Then by insensible degrees we accustomed the bird to obey our word of command; sometimes we used force, at other times gentle words and dainty morsels, to accomplish our task. By these means it learned to bend down, to rise up again, to turn to the right or left, to walk, trot, gallop, sometimes fastened to the bull, sometimes mounted by Jack or Frank. When by any chance the animal became restive—a handkerchief thrown over its eyes, or a few puffs of tobacco smoke, very quickly brought it to reason again.

To make a long story short, I may say that at the end of about a month's teaching I considered the bird's education sufficiently advanced to utilise its services. In the first place I made a new sort of trace, by which I could attach it to the cart, or strap on a burden to its back;

but when it came to providing a bit and bridle, I confess I was puzzled. I had never heard of a bit being fixed to a bird's mouth, but having noticed that the absence of light affected the ostrich, and that he stopped immediately he found himself in darkness, I devised a cap somewhat after the fashion which Fritz had provided for his eagle. In this headgear I enveloped the ostrich, and fastened it around his neck. I pierced two holes in front of his eyes and before which I fixed two tortoise-shell plates. To these I attached strings, so that the plates could be moved at pleasure, so that if they were both pulled aside the ostrich would gallop straight forward. If one were closed the bird would immediately turn away from that side which was darkened, and if both plates were pulled over the eye-holes it would stop short immediately.

I was obliged to please the boys by decorating the headgear of the ostrich with some of his relatives' feathers, ribbons, and pieces of linen,



ANGORA RABBIT.

which really had a very good effect when they were moved by the wind, or by the rapidity of the bird's course.

So far there had been no thought of employing the ostrich in any other way besides carrying burdens or drawing them, but I now conceived the notion of making him serve as a race-horse, so I had to set about constructing a riding saddle for his back. Without entering into details as to the manner in which I set about this work, suffice it to say that I succeeded so far that, had I been at the Cape of Good Hope, I have no doubt that I should have been appointed Saddler-in-Chief to the ostriches.

Our bird, however, had considerable difficulty to accustom himself to his new trappings; but already reconciled by his former training, he submitted to play the part of horse with a very good grace, and to run the distance between Felsenheim and Falcon's Nest three times more quickly than our best steeds could have done. This extraordinary speed was of the greatest use to us.

Scarcely had we finished the training of the ostrich, than the question

arose as to whose property he was. Jack did not wish to give up his claim, and his brothers were by no means inclined to relinquish theirs, and I was obliged to interpose authoritatively to put a stop to their disputes.

Jack being for one thing more active than Ernest or Fritz, and for another, stronger than Frank, appeared to me to deserve the preference which I gave him, on the condition, of course, that if the bird became his property, it should always be at the disposal of his brothers, and be used by all the family when occasion necessitated it.

I spent many days in preparing the bears' skins, and having at length succeeded, I set about making some caps, of which we were in great need.

I accordingly divided the duties for the accomplishment of this plan. Some of the party were allotted the task of scraping, with some old razors which had belonged to the sailors, all the hairs from the skins of the ondatras; the other boys collected and combed out the angora hairs, and my wife cleaned and mixed the two kinds. My duty was to prepare the shapes of the hats which were high and broad-brimmed, and which I had soon finished, also the blocks to press them out on. I set about the work *con amore*; the hair flew about enough to choke us. I tinged the whole with cochineal, by steeping the felt in the juice until it had taken the colour thoroughly. I then rubbed the hat with the melted resin to render it waterproof. Having polished it up with a piece of shark's skin, and passed it again over the fire to make the hair shiny, I placed it upon the "shape" to dry. Next day I had an excellent wide-awake hat, very light and stiff, though somewhat too high in the crown, for the "shapes" had not been very well made.

This wonderful production, nicely trimmed, was subsequently placed upon Frank's head, and every one was delighted with the unexpected success which had attended our first essay in hat-making.





CHAPTER XLVI.

More Hats wanted.—Pottery.—Stuffing the Condor.—A Greenland Canoe.—Swimming Jackets.—A Bowl of Jelly.—Shark Island, and Whale Island.



Of course the other boys each wanted a new hat, and I promised them they should be supplied on condition that they procured the necessary materials; that they caught the civets; combed the rabbits frequently, and sought generally for the means of making the hats. I also instructed them to go in search of fullers' thistle, or something of that kind, wherewith to soften the hairs; I then made some mouse-traps of brass wire, with a spring such as I had seen used in Switzerland to catch mice and rats. We intended these for the capture of the ondstras and water rats which frequented the borders of the marsh. The springs were sufficiently strong to seize and hold the head or neck of any animal which ventured to seize the bait, or even the paws if the intruder ventured to steal it. We chose carrots to bait for the rodents, but for the swimmers we used a species of sardine, which we often found in the bay, and caught easily in a handkerchief, and which, even when turning bad, these four-footed lovers of fish did not despise.

With the object of exciting the boys to exertion, I decided that every fifth animal should be handed over to me so that I might, by degrees, collect material sufficient for head gear for my wife and myself.

The boys quite agreed to this deduction. Frank only wished to know whether he would be expected to furnish his share, since he had a hat already, and that there was no need to think of him. I accordingly gave him to understand that it was more generous to give his assistance without reference to what he might already have acquired.

The successful result of the hat manufacture made me desirous, and also encouraged me, to try my hand at some other things, and particu-

larly porcelain. But as I possessed but a very small quantity of the clay I was obliged to content myself with some unimportant essays in this direction. It was behind our stable in the salt cavern that we set up our china manufactory, with some tables and wheels, upon which to dry the vessels we made.

I managed to construct a potter's wheel out of one of the wheels of a gun carriage which we had brought from the wreck, and beneath this I fixed a turning plate, upon which one could fashion common vessels in a regular form without very great difficulty, and my first idea was to supply the long-wished for vessels to contain the milk and cream which



COYPU RATS.

my wife had so long desired, to supersede the calabashes which she had been obliged to use hitherto.

When the workshop was fixed up, I took my supply of porcelain clay, and mixed it with the talc, which I had chipped from the block, and reduced to powder. I purified and passed this mixture through a sieve and allowed it to dry. The asbestos I handed to my wife to make incombustible wicks, until we found some more useful way of disposing of this substance.

I made some bowls of various sizes, and heated them in the fire in a common earthen vessel, from which they came out white as snow and of fine grain, so that it really would be difficult to find more perfect shapes, for the talc which I had mixed with the clay had imparted a great solidity to it and prevented it from "running."

I now searched amongst our stores for the box which contained the glass beads, which had been intended as presents for the savages, when we began to trade with them. I ground them with my hammer upon the anvil. Some were black and some yellowish. These I reduced to a fine powder, of which I made a varnish which I applied to the bottoms of the vessels. I then passed them through the fire once again in a covered vessel which prevented the bowls from being smoked, and also equalized the heat to all parts, and besides, it amalgamated the colours of the glass and made it look like a beautiful enamel.

I then used the remainder of the porcelain clay to make some pretty vases, and to apply to them something more ornamental with the different coloured glass beads. I only succeeded in procuring a few small tea-cups and saucers, a small milk-jug, a sugar-basin and half a dozen small plates, all more like Chinese ware than English. The other experiments did not succeed.

It was not without much difficulty that I succeeded in making even these few articles, for with the object of making them as near perfection as possible, I had first made wooden models as well as my limited experience as a turner would permit. I then had covered these models with gypsum, with which I had pressed my porcelain clay, which, after I had dried, I exposed to the fire in a common glass cylinder. I then allowed it to cool by degrees, and so obtained some very pretty specimens. As for the painting I contented myself with experimenting upon the plates, which Fritz undertook to ornament with green leaves, fruits, and flowers, which, although rather pale in tint, had a very good effect.

As I had no porcelain clay to continue my work, and the approach of the rainy season precluded any search for a new supply, I made up my mind, to the great satisfaction of all the party, to attempt to stuff the condor and the urubu. I first softened the skins in warm water, and then rubbed them over with some of the euphorbia gum to keep out the insects, then I collected some pieces of light bark of the sort we had used to make our canoe, and of which there was some left. This bark I cut, and gave it, as nearly as possible, the shape of the bodies of the two birds, of which I had taken the measure, and formed the legs of sticks wrapped round with cotton. After having sewn the skin on to the back I fixed each wing in its place, and passed some pieces of brass wire through the legs. They now only wanted eyes, and I saw that my essays in painting the bowls would prove very useful.

We made of the remainder of the porcelain clay four marbles of the proper size. We painted them with eyes on them and passed them through the fire. They succeeded very well; and fastened into the eye orifices of the two birds gave them almost their natural expression. Thus it was we acquired an important addition to our museum.

As we were now in the middle of the rainy season, and as the training of the ostrich, by which we occupied ourselves during the less rainy periods, did not sufficiently fill up our time, the boys, against all rules of proper domestic discipline, would have become very idle and lazy in



THE CONDOR.

their spare time if I had not proposed the carrying out of a project—a new work which would give us all plenty of occupation.

Every one was excited, and Fritz insisted upon making a Greenland canoe. “We have now,” I said, “a post on the land; we must organize one also at sea. We shall then be able to receive news very quickly from the most distant frontiers of our kingdom, and to make still more useful discoveries.”

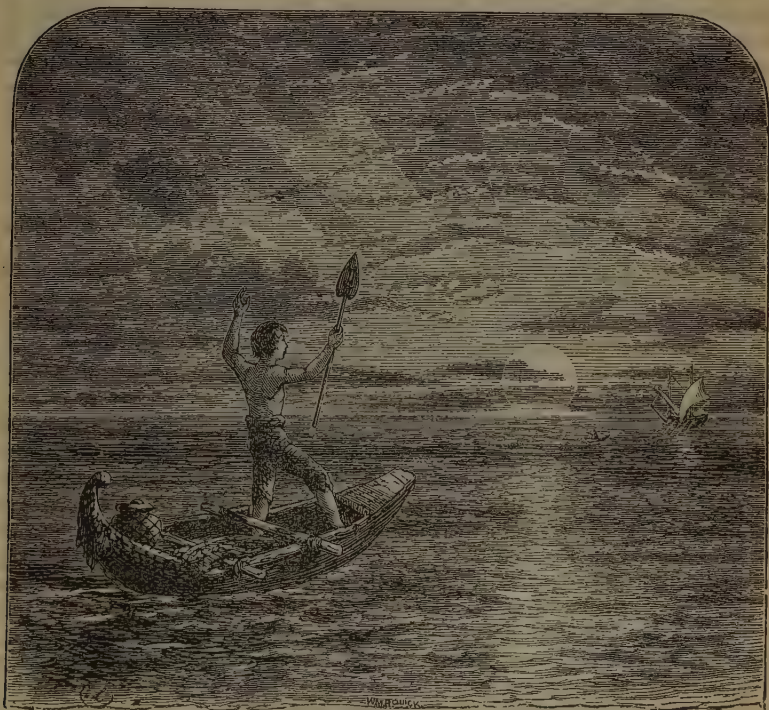
This proposition was unanimously approved and adopted. My wife

alone, in her anxiety, asked further explanation; and when she understood that the Greenland kaiak were only made of sealskin, she hesitated to give her approval, for she was declared enemy of the sea, and very nervous about it. She was at last persuaded to give, if not a formal consent, at any rate a tacit approbation to our proposition, and we joyfully set about our work in the hope, at any rate, of finishing the framework of our new boat before the end of the rainy season. I proposed in this matter to follow my own ideas as to form, and arrangement, as I had done in the construction of the former boat, for I flattered myself that as a European I could excel the skilfulness of the poor Greenlanders.

I first laid down two keels of the strongest whalebone, and of those bones which are naturally curved like sickles. I attached two of these on each keel, arched in an opposite direction at equal distances from each other, supported like the runners of a sledge. We fitted them quite tightly, so that the keel was no thicker in one place than in another. I made the joining more solid by daubing it with resin, which we had already used to caulk over other boats. The points of the two arched bows were about twelve feet apart. I made two grooves in the lower part of the keels, into which I introduced two small metal wheels which protruded about two inches, and upon which I could run the boat up on land with greater facility. I united the two parallel keels, and braced them with small pieces of bamboo, so that they would have borne some resemblance to a ladder if they had not been curved at the ends. These ends I fastened together, so as to make a "cut water" at each side. I had attached a third bone perpendicularly between these horns, so that I might unite the upper part of the canoe, and I also fixed iron rings to the place where I had joined the ends of the keels. These rings were for the purpose of more easily mooring the kaiak. I cut my planks to lay along my little ship, of split bamboo, with the exception of the most elevated parts of the bulwarks, which I made of whole reeds which we had found all along the margin of the marsh. For the convex side I took reeds split in half, which suited very well in consequence of their suppleness, and the ease with which they were bent. This was about three feet below the most convex part. The sides extended forward and abaft, getting narrower as they were continued. A deck was over all, with the exception of a hole in the centre, the sides of which I made with the lightest wood and grooved all round, so that I was able to insert in it the swimming jacket of the rower; it appeared quite a part of the boat, and the water could not even penetrate between the sitter and the side of the deck. In the centre beneath the hole I fixed a small seat, upon which the navigator could sit so as not to get too tired by kneeling. I had tried here to depart from the rules followed by the Greenlanders; for, according to their idea, the rower

must be seated like a tailor, or with his legs extended entirely. The latter position appeared to me to be ill adapted for the development of the rower's strength, and the former was too tiring.

Thus the framework of my canoe was finished agreeably to my wishes, but not without many a failure. Although quite two inches too high, in consequence of the seat in question, it appeared likely to render us very good service, it was so elastic; for when I shoved it with all my



force along the stony beach to give it a trial, it ran along as lightly as a balloon, and sat so well upon the water that even a very heavy weight only sank it about an inch.

It was now absolutely necessary to finish it, and that could not be done all at once, although I will give the description so as to close the subject. I chose two of the largest sealskins I could get, cleaned them in the ordinary manner, steeped them in vinegar, scraped and

dried them in the sun, and then covered them with the melted resin. This treatment rendered them perfectly waterproof, and so very elastic that I was enabled to draw them over the deck of the kaiak like an india-rubber bag. We sewed them together down the middle with some twine and catgut, and did the same at the bow and stern, where we cut off the surplus skin, and then caulked over the joining with the melted caoutchouc to prevent the water getting underneath the skin.

But before we occupied ourselves with the exterior, we lined the interior of the boat with sealskin, prepared in the same way, fastened down between the keels, and made air-tight and water-tight. Then it came to the turn of the deck to be fitted up; here transversal bamboo canes were also covered over with the sealskin, and the reeds were treated in the same manner, and the hole made waterproof. I had placed the opening for the sitter a little astern, for I was in hopes to be able to fix a sail forward. Meantime a double-bladed paddle was made of bamboo about the ordinary length, and I also supplied a large bladder full of air to act as a float in case the boat should run the risk of being upset.

Up to this time we had been entirely occupied in the completion of our kaiak; now we begged my wife's contribution in the form of some swimming jackets, without which I would not permit any of my boys to go out in the kaiak, for a wave might penetrate into the opening and fill the boat with water, which would be very dangerous for the rower, for even though he had his cork jacket on, yet he might go to the bottom with the boat. So we made, after my design, some jackets of bladder the seal, but we did not succeed without a great deal of trouble. They were composed in the first place of a doublet which fitted to the body and only opened at the ends, so that one was obliged to put it on over the head, with the arms raised, and fasten it round the waist. Over this was placed another skin which formed a species of bag and covered the whole body, and which could be tightened at the wrists with cords. Around the hips we sewed a sort of flap, so that when the rower sat down in the boat this flap extended round him on to the deck, and the water could not penetrate into the opening. As the doublet was securely fastened under the arms, and round the chest, and at the neck, and as I had rubbed all the seams with the resin, it formed a sort of leathern bottle between the chest and the hips, to which I attached a small tube furnished with a cork. This tube could be easily placed to the mouth, and by these means the whole dress could be inflated with air, and the wearer float upon the surface of the water, even should the boat be overturned.

Thus we passed the rainy season in agreeable occupations, without neglecting our reading and study, and many arrangements of the interior

of our habitation to vary the monotony. As soon as the weather cleared up a little we went out in the fields and commenced all sorts of work in the open air. The first swimming jacket was intended for Fritz, and was tried one fine morning. We took the kaiak to Felsenheim by water and Fritz put on the singular costume. We were almost overcome with laughter at his appearance, particularly when he commenced to inflate his dress; however, he walked with the greatest gravity towards the shore, and entered into the water where the beach shelved gradually down, and at length finding that he could no longer keep his feet, he saw that he was in the water only up to his waist, and continued his course thus till he reached Shark Island. Then he got out of the water



SEA SPIDERS.

and shook himself like a duck, and shouted to us. We hastened to launch the canoe and to join him, and the young swimmer received my congratulations and those of his mother, but his brothers turned him round and round, punched his inflated dress, and joked him unmercifully.

We then drew the cork from the tube, and allowing the air to escape delivered the boy from his extraordinary dress. The success of our first attempt gave us great pleasure, and the three other boys begged very hard that their mother would make them swimming jackets also of the same pattern. We took advantage of the occasion to inspect our young antelopes, and gave them some enticing food, which pleased them very

much, and made them very lively. We saw that the straw had evidently been a good deal laid on, and that, therefore, they must have made use of their hut to shelter themselves, so we did not regret the trouble we had taken in putting it up.

We walked all round the island in search of any new corals or shells which might have been brought up by the sea. These we wanted for our museum, and our search was not fruitless. We also noticed a quantity of sea-weed. My wife gave particular attention to this and we carried back some of it in our boat.

On our return to Safety Bay, she chose from this cargo a sort of leaves, in the shape of a saw or sword, about six or seven inches long. She washed these carefully, stretched them in the sun and finally dried them at our stove, and drew them out with the most mysterious air. I was surprised at the great care she took of these leaves, which appeared to me so insignificant, and I asked her laughingly whether she intended them to replace the tobacco, for I had no doubt she had long regretted the agreeable puffs of tobacco smoke which she had formerly enjoyed from the sailors' pipes. She laughed at my quizzing, and replied that she wished to stuff our mattresses with the sea weeds so that we should have cooler beds when the hot weather came, but her look as she spoke was so quizzical that I began to think there was some further mystification or surprise in store for me.

One day when we were returning very tired and hot from an expedition to Falcon's Nest, my wife came out of the house to meet us, and offered us a bowl of the most beautiful jelly that any man dying of thirst could have wished for. We could scarcely express our astonishment and admiration, but we tasted the delicacy and pronounced it remarkably good, and agreed that we had never eaten anything nicer or more refreshing. My wife smiled with an air of satisfaction, and said,—“Yes, dear, it is a stroke of genius of your head cook, who would be ashamed only to exercise her art in a common-place way. This jelly was made of the seaweed that we picked up in Shark Island, and which I preserved carefully notwithstanding all your jokes.”

“I now understand,” I replied, “the reason of the great care you took of those leaves; but how did you get the idea of making jelly out of them? I have but a very confused recollection of ever having read of any such thing.”

“Oh! you men,” replied my wife, “you think that women are only automaton and can only move by reason of the impulse which you impart to them. But if we do not possess the science which you have in your books, we are gifted with a much finer spirit of observation.”

“I quite agree with all that,” I replied, “but where did you learn to make the jelly?”

"From the inhabitants at Cape Town, on our way hither, since you want so particularly to know. They often went out and gathered baskets full of these leaves, which they washed and dried carefully, they steeped them afterwards for five or six days in fresh water, which was often changed, and then cooked them for some hours with orange juice, lemon, and sugar, when they were made into a jelly. As I had no sugar nor lemons, I was obliged to content myself with the juice of the



sugar-cane, some honey, the leaves of the raversara, and the cinnamon bark, and I found that these did not do so badly after all, for I had frequently tasted the jelly at the Cape, and I do not think mine is at all inferior to it."

It was now my turn to give some information respecting our expedition to Shark Island. We had found the mangoes in good condition and growing rapidly. The cocoa nuts which we had planted at the foot of the rock, and the pines, were in good condition, and even the nuts which I had thrown at hap-hazard amongst the rocks had taken root in

many places, and promised to give quite a green aspect to the barren island at no very distant period.

On this occasion we discovered at an almost inaccessible spot on the island, a very abundant spring, and many footmarks around it proved to us that the animals came there to drink, which was a great pleasure to us, for we began to think that the rain water which had collected in the crevices of the rock would not suffice for their daily requirements. Having found the plantations on Shark Island so flourishing we hoped to find those on Whale Island in an equally prosperous condition, so we continued our expedition and paid a visit to the rabbits. We saw from a distance that they were feeding on the algæ which the sea cast up, and we were very glad of this, for it proved to us that they were able to find food without doing any injury to our plantation. But when we landed they took fright and bounded away, disappearing in a few seconds in the burrows which they had hollowed out amongst the rocks. I perceived that we should do well to construct a resting-place for them ourselves, so that we could capture them whenever we wished, and it was then that we made all the arrangements referred to in a preceding chapter, and which kept us employed for so many days.

This new arrangement for the rabbits was dignified by the name of a warren, which also signifies a place where fishes are fed, that is to say, a particular spot in the water, where, by placing faggots one over the other, fishes are induced to assemble in great numbers to enjoy the shade, and where they can easily be taken in large quantities.

The aspect of the plantation in Whale Island, which we visited, was not so satisfactory, for we then discovered that the greedy little rabbits had scraped the bark from almost all the young trees, and had eaten nearly all the cocoa-nut seeds. The pines only had been spared, probably owing to their resinous taste. We were therefore obliged, as the plantation was of great interest to us, to carry a new supply of cocoanuts, some young trees, and grafts to the island; but we took care to surround the seedlings with an enclosure of prickly plants, so that the animals could not penetrate them.

Before leaving the island we gave the rabbits some food, and then explored every corner of it carefully. We soon found the colossal skeleton of the whale completely denuded of flesh and tumbling to pieces. The birds, with the assistance of the air and the sun, had so stripped and whitened the bones that they could now be used for any purpose without being disagreeable. The dorsal vertebræ appeared to me particularly suited to various uses. We pulled out ten or a dozen pieces on the spot, and, passing a rope round them, we dragged them, as soon as the tide was high enough, behind our canoe, home to Felsenheim.

I proposed to make, before harvest time arrived, four or five corn-crushers, because I found the vertebræ of the whale would be very useful for this purpose. We had been troubled for a long time by having to crush the corn in a mortar. I then thought of procuring some blocks of wood into which we could fix this vertebræ, and for this purpose it was necessary to find a tree high enough and big enough to supply blocks of the required size. I therefore determined, as soon as I could, to make an excursion on my own account, to which my wife gave her consent, all the more willingly, as we perceived to our great surprise that Ernest remained in our library, and that he preferred the



society of his beloved books to the chances of the sport enjoyed by his brothers. So I harnessed Sturm, which Jack had now discarded for the ostrich, to the old sledge which we had fitted up with the gun-carriage wheels, and set out, accompanied by two of the dogs, to cross the Jackal River and explore the neighbouring forest.

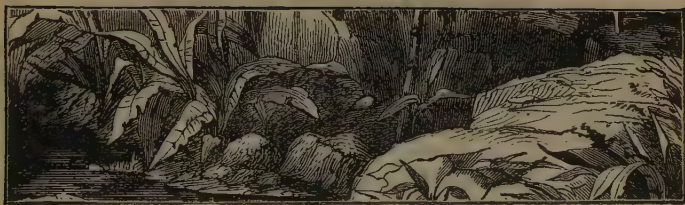
Immediately I had passed the bridge and looked round upon our plantation of manioc and potatoes which extended along the opposite bank, I experienced a most vivid sensation of anger on seeing the whole place devastated. At first I could not understand how it had been brought about, and for the moment I was uncertain whether my sons might not have, with my wife's directions, gathered in the crops. But on approaching nearer, I was convinced that the devastation had

been caused by some pigs, and this impression was confirmed by the traces, but I could not say whether they were wild or domesticated animals. As my curiosity was excited, and as my old sow had disappeared some time previously with her young ones, I made up my mind to get to the bottom of the matter. This was not a very difficult thing to do, for I had only to follow the footmarks of the ravages which I found at intervals and which led me at length to the rocky wall, and at the other side of the wall across the fence, and the old plantation near Falcon's Nest, where we had first discovered the potatoes, I found similar traces of destruction.

I was very angry indeed with these ravagers, who had worked so much mischief to our crops, although nature had prepared such a rich banquet for them. However, I could not perceive any of them, and that made me think their number was not large. The dogs ran in all directions, baying loudly, and before long they routed out the offenders, at the head of which our old sow appeared, grunting and grumbling. They were all ready to encounter the dogs, and kept them at a respectful distance by grunting and displaying their teeth. For my own part I was so angry at their depredations that I could not help discharging both barrels at them. By the two shots I killed three young pigs, and the rest of the herd turned tail and disappeared in the bushes. I called back the dogs, which were preparing to follow them, and made them happy with the heads of the three animals I had killed, for I had cut the heads off so that the bodies might bleed more easily. I then placed the carcases on the sledge, and fixed them with the cords drawn from my game bag; but I was not very proud of my exploit, for I felt that I had only done it in a moment of excitement, and we were not in very great want of food at home.

Before long I found the tree which I thought necessary for my project; it was nearly two feet in thickness, with a perfectly straight trunk. I marked it forest fashion, and as it was very near the ditch in which the loam was found, I took out a good supply of the clay, and then returned to Felsenheim without any further delay.





CHAPTER XLVII.

Return of the Boys.—The Kangaroos.—Cinnamon Trees.—Skinning the Kangaroo by Machinery.—Tree-felling.—Threshing out the Corn.—Farm Operations.—Trying the Kaiak.—Fritz disappears.—The Morse.



ARRIVED at home some time before my sons, who had gone out rat-hunting, having, as well as they, missed the dinner hour. This was a reason the more to induce my wife to roast one of the little pigs which I had shot. Ernest and I assisted her. The three animals were properly pre-

pared; one was destined for our supper, the two others were cut up and salted, and I begged my wife to take them out of the brine and to hang them to smoke afterwards, and then, so that they might keep well and not become dry, she was to rub them with melted butter and goose-grease, much in the same way as we treated the pigeons, etc. The pig intended for our supper was put down to roast, and although my wife found some fault with me for my last hunting expedition, she afterwards accepted my excuse on the subject.

It was not till towards evening, and when we were really getting anxious about them, that the boys arrived. Jack came first by a long way on the ostrich, while Fritz and Frank followed him more slowly. The two last had been obliged to take charge of all the booty, since Jack's steed could not carry anything but his rider. We perceived that the brave *Brunner* bore two sacks, which, when opened, were found to contain four of those animals with bills, about twenty ondstras, a kangaroo, a monkey, two animals something like hares, and half-a-dozen musk-rats. I took the last for the desman or *castor moschata*, which are related to the ondstra, but which have a very cartilaginous trunk. As for the other two unknown animals, I fancied they must be the long-tailed and black-bellied hare which Buffon has named the *tolai*.

Fritz also had brought with him a bundle of very large thistles, which

had been overlooked in our examination of the animals. These were teasels, and would be very useful in our hat manufacture. Exclamations of surprise, and numerous questions arose on all sides, and Jack, as usual, was the first to speak.

"Oh, papa," he cried, "my ostrich went like the wind. Once I really thought I should have lost my breath. Tears came into my eyes and I was half-blinded by the sand. You really must make me a mask with glass eyes, so that I can at least see where I am going when I ride through the air with such rapidity."

"No, no, my young cavalier," I replied, "that is not at all necessary."

"And why not?" he asked.

"Because, in the first place, you should prefer your request in a more modest manner, and not say 'you must' when you ask your parents to do you a favour; and secondly, because I think it much better that you should yourself make what you require, so that you may not be lazy and unskilful any longer."

"We have been very much amused to-day, papa," said Fritz; "like the Seminoles of Florida, of whom I have read somewhere, we have existed on the products of our hunting and on roots. We have brought you back a fair quantity of skins which we might have exchanged with merchants for brandy, but which we preferred to barter with you for a little of the Muscat wine of Felsenheim, if you do not think it is too valuable."

"That is a good suggestion, Fritz," I replied. "The wine shall be forthcoming. You appear to me to have earned it well, although you ought not to have gone on your excursion in such a very independent manner."

"For my part," said Frank, "I should very much prefer some solid food, for we have had only a very wretched snack all day."

"Very well," I replied; "you shall have something solid. The culinary art will gain another victory over the cookery of savage life; but, in the first place, you must look after your steeds. A good rider always attends to his beast before he thinks of himself."

Scarcely had the animals been unloaded and stabled, than my wife put the supper on table, which was a most agreeable surprise to the children. She served dish after dish with most pleasant remarks.

"Here, gentlemen," she began, "here is an European sucking pig in the guise of an American wild boar. He has lost his head after arriving at his destination. Here," she continued, "you have a young and very excellent European salad gathered from a garden in the antipodes. Is it not wonderful? And finally," she said, as she brought in a large bowl, "here is a real Hottentot jelly produced in the marine garden of old Madame Thetis."

Such cheerfulness on the part of my wife gave us all great pleasure and we saluted her with three unanimous cheers, when she placed upon the table a flask of spiced hydromel, and for dessert some small slices of cassava, fried in butter and served with sweet sauce, and which she offered to us as maccaroons lately come from Guinea. We made a repast worthy of the Homeric gods.

Fritz then began to tell us how they stopped all day in the district near Waldegg, where they had placed their traps, and had caught the ondatras with carrots, the desmans with small fish and worms ; how they



had thought that these last were a species of ondatras, because they also smelt of musk. He told us that the billed animals fell into the trap unexpectedly, and how, so as not to lose time, they were content to dine upon some fish fried with anise root, and even then they almost grudged the moments they spent over dinner.

Jack very soon began to talk again, and said,—

“Ah, yes ; my hunter is truly incomparable. He hunted the rabbits and hares splendidly.”

"Mine," said Frank, "brought me to the kangaroo, which I soon made bite the dust. In truth, he is an animal that has never yet smelt powder."

"For my part," said Fritz, "I have brought only these great thistle, which I thought would be very useful in the manufacture of our hats. I have also brought some shoots which will soon grow up. Besides, I knocked over an impertinent monkey which threw a cocoa-nut at my head from the top of a tree."

After supper, I examined the various things the boys had brought home, and in the thistle-like plant I recognised one which I thought would prove very useful. Amidst the shoots I recognised with much pleasure two young cinnamon apples and two older cinnamon trees. All these were welcomed by my wife and planted next day in our kitchen garden. While she and the boys were occupied thus, I turned my attention to a new machine I hoped to make, by which we should the more easily skin the animals we caught. When searching one of the medicine chests which we had brought from the wreck, I had pitched upon a large squirt, and when I had fitted it with two valves, I had a machine, incomplete it is true, but quite sufficient to compress the air. When I drew back the piston, the air entered by the valves into the squirt, and when I pushed the piston back, the air was ejected with considerable force.

When the boys came around to finish the skinning of the animals, and all ready for a joke, I came amongst them, gravely carrying this instrument like a sword under my arm, and this gave me quite a military air, so that they all began to laugh, and one exclaimed,—

"Oh, here is the squirt! How can such a surgical instrument be any use in a butcher's shop?"

I replied, "this good squirt has had pity upon our knives, and comes to offer its poor services to assist in saving us some trouble in our employment."

"We are very anxious to see how it will do that," the boys cried, as they surrounded me with every token of curiosity.

I laid hold of the carcase of the kangaroo, which was still untouched, and tied it up by the hind legs, so that the chest was as high as my own. I then made a slight incision in the skin between the forelegs, and inserting the point of the tube of my new air-machine very carefully between the skin and the flesh, I pumped with all my strength.

The kangaroo skin swelled up like a balloon, and became a shapeless mass; but I did not cease my labour until I perceived that the whole of the skin, with the exception of one or two trifling pieces, was quite separated from the flesh. I then desisted; and by means of a few cuts, we raised the whole hide: thus the operation, notwithstanding my want

of skill, had only occupied about half the time that we usually spent in skinning an animal.

"Splendid! capital!" cried the boys. "You really are a most clever man, papa. But how is this operation made so easy?"

"By means of the cellular tissue," I replied, "which connects the skins of animals to their flesh and muscles. It consists of a great number of tiny vesicles, or cells, which lie over each other, in which the fat is contained, but which in certain illnesses is filled with air, and produces a swelling. If one introduces artificially, and with force, a quantity of air into this tissue, the cells are filled, and finally burst; so the skin becomes detached from the flesh, and is easily removed. That is my invention, and I believe it is only practised by the Greenlanders; for as soon as they have killed a seal, they blow between the flesh and the skin, at least sufficiently to keep it afloat if attached to their canoe. They also say that the inflation gives a more appetising flavour to their meat."

I continued my pneumatic operation, and we very soon had skinned the animals; for they were not large, and my skilfulness increased as I proceeded. Nevertheless, the whole day was spent in this occupation.

We fixed the next day to cut down the tree I had marked; so very early in the morning we set out with cords, saws, axes, in our cart, and on the way I pointed out to the boys the depredations committed by the sow and her litter of young boars, three of which I had shot. When we reached the tree I had selected, I directed Fritz and Jack to go up and cut away all the larger branches, so that in falling they should not injure the neighbouring trees. They also fastened two ropes to the topmost part, so that when it did fall we should be enabled to drag it in whichever direction appeared most suitable.

A horizontal saw was then applied to the trunk. This saw entered at the side and was hidden in the wood; but the handles were perpendicular. So we made two deep cuts on opposite sides of the tree, but one a little higher up than the other. We then took hold of the ropes, which we had carried away to some distance, and attached meantime to a small tree. We pulled with all our force. The trunk began to waver, creaked loudly, and finally fell to the ground without having caused any accident. We immediately sawed up the trunk into blocks four feet in length, and also cut up the branches into small fagots, which curved according to their growth. The rest was left in the sun to dry before being carried home for firewood.

This operation took us the whole of the second day; so it was not until the third that we were able to carry out the plan for which the six great blocks were wanted. I inserted into the middle of each of them a crooked stick, which came out again to the surface, and in which I made a hole to fasten a transverse piece of wood to allow it to move about as

it on a pivot. To one end I fastened a conical wooden hammer, the rounded head of which reached to the base, which I had hollowed out a little. To the other end of this pivot I made a sort of bucket, and I lessened the weight of the pivot by scraping away the wood, so that the end, with the hammer attached, was much lighter than the bucket when it was full of water; and when the bucket was filled with water, the beam fell back on its pivot, and the hammer rose up. But then the bucket emptied itself, and the hammer regained its position, falling down with some force into the small hole which we had cut at the base. The bucket once more was filled with water, which was supplied from our reservoir by means of bamboo pipes; and by continually filling and emptying the buckets, by alternate and automatic movements of the beam, we constructed a sort of fullers' mill, so that any grain placed in the hollow at the foot of the post was crushed by the weight of the hammer falling upon it when the water emptied itself from the bucket.

As soon as this machine was in working order, my wife placed a portion of rice in one of the six hollows we had made, and occupied herself the whole day in crushing the grain. This was not done so quickly as might have been by means of a wheel, but the rice was sufficiently prepared for cooking purposes. The slowness of the working of the machine did not disquiet us, for we saw we could leave it to work by itself; and besides, there was no hurry, since we were not preparing the grain for the market.

While we were thus occupied at our crushing mill, which was not far from our field, we remarked that the young ostriches and the brood of turkeys paid it frequent visits, and going out apparently very well satisfied. We were much astonished, when, on looking into the cause of this, we found that our corn was quite ripe, although it was only four or five months since it was sown, so that in future we might calculate upon two crops annually.

Under these circumstances it was very unfortunate that we should have to undertake other work; but we could by no means put it off: that was, the herring harvest, and seal catching, which always followed close after it. My wife was very much vexed, and expressed her fear that we should not find time to collect, prepare, salt, and store away the fish. She also called our attention to her loved potatoes and manioc-roots, which it would be necessary to dig up. I consoled her by telling her that these last would keep quite well by remaining in the earth, and that the potatoes would be much more easily dug here than in the heavy and stony soil of Switzerland. I added that it was not necessary here to turn up the fields for these vegetables, for it was quite sufficient to leave the little roots and shoots, and let them sprout of their own accord. "As

for the corn," I said, "we will cut and thrash it by the Italian method, which, if not the most economical, is, at any rate, the shortest and least troublesome. As for the loss we may sustain by so doing, we need not trouble about, since we have the agreeable prospect of two annual harvests."

I chose a considerable space before our house, where the soil was naturally stiff and clayey, and then I made a smooth place which I watered with manure water; then we trampled down this portion of the ground, turned our animals out upon it, and thrashed it with clubs while it was damp. The heat of the sun very quickly absorbed the moisture, but we turned more water on to it, and kept doing so until the ground



was so compact that it did not show the least crack, and appeared to me as solid as the floor of our barns in Europe.

We then went, armed with sickles, to cut the harvest, followed by the palanquin bearers, Sturm and Brummer, who were to receive the grain in the same large basket in which Ernest had been so cruelly knocked about. When we arrived at the field my wife asked for willow twigs to tie up the sheaves, and the young people for rakes to gather up the ears. To these requests I replied that we must dispense with all these superfluities. "We are working in the Italian method, and you know very

well the Italians do not take too much trouble about their reaping, and do not exert themselves to make bands to tie up the sheaves."

"But how then," said Fritz, "do they gather them in and bring them home?"

"It is very easily managed," I said; "they do not bind them in sheaves at all, and they thrash the wheat upon the spot."

Fritz appeared embarrassed, for he did not understand how to do it. I showed him that he could very easily grasp a certain quantity of the ears of corn in his left hand, cut it with the right, tie up the handful with a straw, and throw it into the basket. This process also had the advantage of not obliging the reaper to stoop, which is usually so trying. The children were very much pleased with this plan, and the field was soon strewn with straw without the ears, while our palanquin had been many times filled with the rich harvest.

We returned home with the last basketful, singing harvest songs, and commenced our preparations for the threshing in the barn, after we had made separate heaps of the various descriptions of grain. Ernest and Frank placed these heaps upon the floor we had prepared. Then a regular *fête* began, for each of the boys mounted his steed, and even the ostrich was pressed into the service. The four boys trotted round and round upon the corn, playing a thousand pranks and raising clouds of dust. My wife and myself, armed with wooden forks, occupied ourselves in shaking out constantly the untrodden heaps, and bringing them under the feet of the animals which moved in a circle. The animals occasionally seized a mouthful of the grain, but this we did not grumble at, for the Scripture forbids us to "muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn," "and besides," I added, "there is no want of grain, and it would be very stingy indeed to deny our assistants a mouthful now and then when they were doing such hard work."

When the corn was sufficiently trodden out we set ourselves to winnow it. We gathered it up into small heaps and threw it into the air with small ladles made for the occasion, so that the wind carried away all the chaff and other impurities, while the grain fell to the earth by its own weight. But as the poor winnower very quickly got his mouth, eyes, and nose full of dust and bits of straw, I came to his assistance with the cap with the flaps which I had used to take the bees' nests, and I lent it to whichever of the boys was engaged in the winnowing.

While we were thus engaged, all the inhabitants of our poultry yard arrived, clucking, crowing, running hither and thither, with outstretched necks and wings in the greatest haste to see which would be first to partake of the corn. They began to eat it with great avidity, and our laughter at first prevented our putting a stop to their banquet; but when the boys began to hunt them away somewhat roughly, I interfered on

their behalf, and said, "Let them have their share of the good things; if we lose a little grain we shall gain by the improvement in the birds themselves. This circumstance also appertains to the Italian method of agriculture, and appears to me quite patriarchal and consistent with our position."

My intercession prevailed, and the boys contented themselves by attempting to regulate the appetites of the most greedy fowls.

Afterwards we calculated the nett product of our harvest and we found it to be very considerable, notwithstanding the losses we had sustained in various ways. The maize required very different treatment from the other species of corn; the ears were torn from the straws on the spot,



denuded of their husks, and laid upon our threshing floor. When they were quite dry, they were beaten with long branches, which detached the grain from the remaining straw. We had soon our supply cleared away, and we found that for every one bushel we had down, we had reaped eighty, which clearly proved that this species of grain is the most suited to the soil and locality.

It was necessary, however, to think about turning the field up afresh if we wished to enjoy a second crop that year. This time we ploughed our fallow land, and took the stalks of maize to our house to burn. While we were mowing down the straw we were astonished at the arrival of a tremendous number of quails and partridges, which took up their abode

in the field during our absence. Their appearance was so unexpected that we only succeeded in killing one, which Fritz knocked down with a stone as it was flying away. I made up my mind for the future to have a regular shooting party after the harvest, for I was quite sure the birds would pay us another visit under similar circumstances.

We made a rick of the straw and distributed it amongst the animals by degrees. We stuffed the mattresses of our beds with the maize leaves, for they are much more elastic and solid than the ordinary straw. Finally, my wife burned a quantity of the stalks, which she found very useful for washing clothes, in consequence of the abundance of alkali which the ashes contained.

When the field was ploughed I sowed it again, but changed the character of the crops, and this time I put in rye, barley, and oats, which I hoped to see ripen before the rainy season. This important work was scarcely completed, when the shoal of herrings arrived. We did not trouble ourselves very much about them on this occasion, for we had such a great quantity of provisions in stock, both for our own use and the beasts, that we thought it necessary only to fill two small barrels, one with salted herrings, and the other with smoked fish, so as to have a little variety in our food. But we filled all our reservoirs with live herrings, so that we might put our hand on them whenever we wanted them.

The appearance of the herrings was followed by the much more important one of the seals, of which we took advantage, with the more avidity, as now, in consequence of the machine I had made with the squirt, we had found a much more easy way of removing their skins and inflating the bladders. It was only at this period that the boat was completely finished, and covered with the skins, as I have before related. I adapted to the deck of the skiff, a locker, which could be taken away at pleasure, and left in the house; this was intended to carry provisions, fresh water, and some firearms. I also made two very strong harpoons, to which I attached bladders filled with air, and placed them along the bulwarks of the kaiak, in hooks which had been provided for the purpose.

When all was finished, Fritz was named as the first one to try the ship, and he was solemnly invested with his new dignity and his dress. Every one pressed round him to render assistance in donning the insignia of his office. Trousers of sealskin, the much lauded waistcoat, and a Greenlander's sea hat, made of the bladder of the seal, was his defensive armour. His offensive arms were the harpoons, and the two-bladed paddle which he brandished in a theatrical manner, threatening all the sea monsters, while he quoted Neptune's famous speech in the *Eneid* of Virgil, ending with *quos ego*. He then crept on his knees in-

to the kaiak, placed the harpoons in the rings to the right and left, fastened the flap of his waistcoat into the groove of the deck around him, swelled himself out like a frog by blowing into the small tube on his chest. Ernest and Jack dragged the boat by the paynter in front, while Frank pushed behind with all his strength. The boat moved very quickly along the beach, thanks to the little wheels underneath. Fritz gave forth the song of a Greenland fisherman, and imitated their



THE WALRUS.

rough voices and their gestures so well, that we could not mistake his intention. We laughed heartily at the comical figure he presented; even his mother could not help smiling, although she did not observe these preparations without anxiety, and her face immediately regained a very serious expression. I was not at all anxious about him this time, for he had made great progress in swimming, and had grown strong and active, and I was sure he would come well out of any adventure that

might befall him. However, to set my wife's mind at ease, I got ready the other boat, so that we might be able to go to Fritz's assistance in case of accident.

The three boys dragged the kaiak to a place where the beach trended gently to the sea, and launched their boat with all their strength, uttering a loud "hurrah," as the occupant of the kaiak rapidly descended the beach and found himself, all of a sudden, about a dozen paces out in the bay, where he balanced himself gaily on the green and shiny mirror of the sea. He performed several movements and evolutions *à la Greenlander*, and then went ahead in a straight line at a tremendous pace. He then went to the right or left, or backward as he pleased, and then to his mother's great terror he turned over on one side, when she uttered a piercing cry, but we perceived that the boat could not be overturned, and that the waistcoat also prevented the navigator from being swamped. Then, with another stroke of the paddle, he bounded up again and continued his evolutions.

We were all delighted to see what command he had over the boat, and expressed our approbation so loudly that Fritz, excited to rashness, directed his course towards the mouth of the Jackal River, but there he was caught by the current of the river and carried out to sea.

This was not altogether to my taste, so I thought it prudent to set off with Ernest and Jack in the other boat in pursuit of Master Fritz in his involuntary course. We were obliged to make haste when we found that Fritz had disappeared; we rushed over the water with all our speed and were soon quite close to the reef where our old ship had been wrecked, and against which I thought the current would have carried Fritz. Some of the reef was above water, while against some part the waves dashed furiously. We sought a passage between the reefs and soon found a place where there was water enough for him to venture; but we soon came into a labyrinth of reefs and little islands which extended to a distant promontory.

I was then very much puzzled to know in what direction to seek for our *Greenlander*, for the detached rocks so frequently intercepted our view, that we could only think Fritz must be behind some of them. But after having sought and watched for him for some hours, I noticed at a long distance off, a small column of smoke rising into the air. I put my hand to my pulse, and counted four beats before I heard the subdued report of a pistol.

"It is Fritz," I said, as I heaved a deep sigh of relief. "It is he who fired that shot."

"Where, where?" cried the boys looking round.

At the same instant we saw another little column of smoke. I counted four pulsations again, and I assured my boys that Fritz was

only a quarter of a league distant from us. We fired a pistol shot as a signal, and soon we were answered by another. We pulled joyously in the direction of the last report though very cautiously, Ernest noting the time. In about ten minutes we perceived Fritz, and in five minutes afterwards we rejoined him and received him with three regular sailor cheers. We were not a little astonished when we perceived, on a sloping reef close by him, the body of a large morse which this young hero had killed, and which I saw would not be difficult to remove.

However, I reproached my sailor very severely for having run away so quickly and so far from us, and told him he had caused us the greatest anxiety. He excused himself by alleging the violence of the Jackal River, from which he had not been able to escape. And then he said, "I met a herd of walruses, which were swimming so close that I had no leisure to think of anything else, for these animals were passing quickly and would soon have escaped, so I launched a harpoon into the back of one of the fugitives. The bladder attached to the handle, and the wound I had inflicted very soon exhausted the walrus. I followed him up closely and gave him a second harpoon. He attempted to hide himself but only succeeded in stranding upon this rock where he expired. This reef appeared to me at first very dangerous, but my boat passed over it like a sea bird, and even when I reached very shallow places where the rocks almost came to the surface of the water, so that my boat touched them, I suffered no harm, for its elasticity caused it to rebound uninjured. So when I anchored here I fired two shots at the morse, for I did not wish him to play me such a trick as the dying boa-constrictor played Jack."

"You have indeed accomplished a very brave deed, Fritz," I said; "for although morses are naturally somewhat timid, when they are wounded they become sometimes very furious, and turn upon their pursuers with their formidable tusks, so that they can severely injure the hunter or his boat, how much more then your little sealskin kaiak. But, thank goodness, you are safe and we have found you, which is better than a thousand morses; besides, after all, I scarcely know what we are to do with this fellow, for he is at least fifteen feet long, although he is not so very bulky."

"Oh papa!" replied Fritz, "if there are no means of taking him over the rocks, do allow me to carry off his head with his two beautiful white tusks. I should so much like to attach them to the bow of my boat, and then I can call it 'THE MORSE,' for it is really worthy of the name."

"No, certainly, my boy, we will not abandon these beautiful teeth, which, although not so long as usual, are nevertheless the most valuable part of the animal, and it is to obtain them that the morse is hunted

for the quality of these ivory tusks is superior to those of the elephant. The flesh, I believe, is not good to eat, and would only be in the way, but I should like to cut off some strips of this thick skin which will be well worth the trouble of carrying home, and while I am occupied in cutting it you may be employing yourselves in taking off the head which you wish for so much. But make haste, for the clouds are gathering, and I believe we shall have a storm."

"Oh Fritz," said Jack, "we must not leave the morse's head behind; it will have a splendid effect on your boat, and people will think, when they see you, that you are riding on the morse's back."

"Yes," continued Ernest, "and when it decays it will have a very nice odour for the navigator."

"We must take measures to prevent that," said Fritz; "it shall be so well prepared and cleaned and dried, that it will be as hard and as wholesome as any of the heads we have seen in the museum at home, and which certainly have no smell."

"But tell me, papa," continued Ernest, "are not morses inhabitants of the Northern Seas? how do they come so far south?"

"The walrus is no doubt an inhabitant of the Northern Seas," I replied; "but it may have been driven down here by storms. However I have heard it stated that there is a small species of morse found at the Cape of Good Hope, which is called the Dugong, the tusks of which are much smaller than those of the true morse. Both species live on sea plants, shell fish, and oysters, and their teeth are very useful in detaching them from the rocks."

While this conversation was going on we were very busy putting our booty on board the boat, and Fritz observed that he thought it would be wise for the future to add to the equipment of his kaiak, a lance, a hatchet, and a compass which could be fastened to the boat under a glass shade in front of the rower, so that he would know how to steer if he at any time were driven off land by a storm.

I thought these suggestions so good that I promised to comply with them. The lance and the hatchet would do very well for attack or defence against the great marine animals, and the use of them would tend to economize our gunpowder.

Having finished our work I wished to take Fritz and his kaiak into our larger boat, but he preferred to return alone in advance, and to announce our return to his mother. I consented, and Fritz started off at once. We followed him, but at a less speed.





CHAPTER XLVIII.

A Terrible Storm.—Boys' Excursion Proposed.—Pemmican.—A Sugar Mill.—The Hyæna.—The Pigeon-post.



SCARCELY had we turned on our homeward journey, than we were surprised by a terrible storm of wind and rain. Fritz was so far in advance of us that we lost sight of him in the rain, but we could not have called to him, even if we could have seen him, in consequence of the continual roar of the tempest. I was very sorry then that I had not taken him on board my boat. I told my sons to put on their cork jackets and to fasten themselves by means of the rings as closely as possible to the boat, so that the waves should not carry them away. It was not without difficulty that I succeeded in doing the same thing. We put ourselves in the hands of Providence, and seeing that we had not the means of steering our boat, we abandoned ourselves to the caprice of the waves, which sometimes carried us up on high, and alternately plunged us to the depths, the extremes of hope and fear.

The storm continued to increase, although every moment we thought it could not be worse. The waves ran mountains high, and seemed to rise up to the dark and thick clouds which came down to touch the surface of the sea. Vivid lightning flashed through the darkness, and threw its lurid glare, sometimes on the crest of the waves, and sometimes upon the deep abysses which seemed to open upon the water. One wave succeeded another, and broke in a loud roar in foaming darkness. The water appeared to raise itself in boiling masses towards the firmament, and to fall back again in heavy rain. Sometimes we descended with the rapidity of lightning into a corresponding gulf, while the spray drenched us and half filled the boat, and threatened us with a swift pursuing death. It seemed to be certain that we must be swallowed up, and no trace of us left.

But the duration of the storm was as short as it was violent, and if it had burst upon us with fury it passed away with rapidity. One might almost have said that a wager had been laid between the clouds, the wind and the waves, and that the wind had won it, for the clouds still lowered over our heads, and the waves tossed us about, and continued to cause us a good deal of alarm.

I was very glad to perceive that our boat was able to resist all the shocks of the water, and that the waves could not overturn it. The weight of the keel kept her upright in the water, and the bladders at the



side did not admit of its sinking to any greater extent than was consistent with our safety. Even the waves, which occasionally appeared to submerge it, did not overturn or swamp us, for we always found time to avoid them or to bale the water out; besides, I frequently turned the boat's head in such a manner that the waves had but very little effect.

But all this did not prevent my feeling very sad, but was sufficient to give me the courage and the necessary presence of mind to give orders and to encourage my young companions. What most troubled me was the fate of Fritz, who had been, no doubt, surprised by the tempest as well as ourselves. I pictured the dear boy either swept on a reef or carried out to sea, perhaps, or lost by some other accident. So I

scarcely dared to pray for his safety. I could only beg for support under the cruel trial and pray for Christian resignation.

At length I saw the outline of our bay, and I breathed freely, like a diver who had reached calm water. We rowed as hard as we could and soon reached a passage between the reef and the entrance to the bay, where we could listen to the roar of the waves in safety.

We found ourselves in comparatively still water, and were very thankful to feel ourselves safe, and gratitude to God was the first feeling that pervaded us all. But the very first thing we saw was my wife with Fritz and Frank kneeling upon the shore with clasped hands, thanking Heaven for the deliverance of Fritz and ourselves.

After we had taken some food we drew the boat up and then carried all our cargo, the head of the morse, etc., with the assistance of our animals, into the grotto, where they were placed with the kaiak which



Fritz and Ernest had carried thither. We put the head and the skin of the morse in our museum, where the latter was properly prepared, and the former was embalmed and dried, so that it could be placed according to Fritz's desire, at the extremity of the boat, and give it a most imposing appearance.

The great rain that had fallen so unexpectedly had swollen the two rivers to a great extent, and they had overflowed their banks in several places. The Jackal River in particular was so full, although its bed was very deep, that our bridge was nearly carried away, and great damage might have been done. We were therefore obliged to take precautions against a recurrence of these events.

When going with this idea to look at the place where the water was running very furiously, we found the ground dotted with little fruits of a reddish brown colour, topped with green leaves, and which appeared like

very large nuts or very small prunes. Their appearance induced the children to taste them ; but when they found out they were very bitter, they quickly rejected them, confessing that they were well punished for their greediness.

As I saw that master Knips the ape did not show any desire to taste these fruits, I should have thought them poisonous if their perfume and shape had not suggested the clove. This discovery was too precious not to awaken all our attention, and we commenced to gather them most industriously. We carried a little store to my wife who received them with great pleasure, and after she had made a choice of them for her nursery, she put by the rest as seasoning for her rice, instead of that eternal pepper with which we had been hitherto supplied.

The passage of the salmon and the sturgeons furnished us with an ample provision of fish which were salted, smoked, and pickled, and I made an attempt which succeeded wonderfully. I kept alive some beautiful salmon, at anchor, so to speak, so that we were able to eat them when fancy took us. We passed a tarred line by the mouth and gills of three fish which we had chosen for this purpose, and two ends of this thread we fastened to stakes securely fixed in a calm spot in the bay. I had read somewhere that they take sturgeons up from Hungary with the idea of transporting them to Vienna, where they arrive perfectly fresh.

About this time it happened that the herd of pigs which had become completely wild, penetrated, during the night, into an enclosure at Felsenheim, and created such an alarm that they would have put everything in disorder if they had had time, so I was obliged to carry out a project which I had long conceived, which was to make a drawbridge over the Jackal River opposite that which we had made at first. We had always been very careful to take up the planks when we had crossed over, but the pigs, with a cunning for which I did not give them credit, walked across the transverse beams and so came to our side ; it was therefore necessary to oppose some insurmountable obstacle to them, which I thought could be obtained by a drawbridge. The task was long and troublesome, but what was that to people who had made boats. We took fifteen days to complete this great work, and when it was finished we saw with satisfaction that we might now remain at home in safety from the attacks, not only of wild boars, but of buffalos, jackals, and other animals.

While this work was proceeding the children often climbed, sometimes for pleasure, and sometimes to assist the work, to the top of the upright posts of the new bridge, and from that elevated position they could perceive in the distance the antelopes and gazelles which they had taken prisoners. The animals appeared sometimes singly, sometimes in troops ; at other times they jumped and gambolled about gaily

in the meadow, but at the first alarm they retreated into the thicket with such speed that in a moment after you would have thought there were no such animals in the neighbourhood.

I found out after several little chats, that my sons had already made up their minds to some new excursion, but I really had no objection to offer, for the fine weather had set in, and change to people in our position was always advantageous, so I gave my consent.

Fritz immediately ran to his mother, who was occupied not far off in the plantation, to beg of her to give him some pieces of bear's flesh with which to make pemmican.

"First, my dear," she replied, "you must tell me what pemmican is, and where it comes from."

"It is an article of food, which the North Americans, and chiefly the fur traders of Canada, carry when on an expedition to the savage tribes. It consists of jerked flesh of bear or kid, cut into squares, which forms a very substantial nourishment, although taken in very small quantities, for it is all pounded up into a small compass, so that it is only necessary to carry very little for a large party."

"Why, then," she said, "do you think of taking this preparation with you now? It does not appear very nice."

"It is because we contemplate a very long journey, and it would be unfortunate to take away too much of the provisions we have left at the house."

"Oh, you greedy boy," she said. "And you never called me to your counsels, because you could not meet all my objections to your proceedings."

"Oh, no, mamma, it is not on that account. It was because we really had not time."

"I should be very glad to believe you," she said; "but this pemmican appears to me to be just the sort of thing to take on a long journey into an inhospitable country where one can only find fruits and vegetables, or perhaps, occasionally, a head of game. In our country, which Providence has stocked so richly, and for a journey of eight or ten leagues, which might be extended to the outside for two days, this preparation of pemmican which appears after all to be nothing more than very dry meat, seems to me to be ridiculous."

"No doubt you are quite right, mamma; but just think of the pleasure and pride you will impart to us if you treat us like real travellers. This thought is elevating, and one thinks oneself quite a great man when one finds himself after the manner of real hunters, chasing live game, when he has the same game cooked in his game bag."

"Do you not think that the meat will be too dry, and that your young imagination is only carrying you away?"

At this moment the rest of the party appeared, and as we took Fritz's part, my wife was obliged to give in and provide the bear's flesh for the projected excursion.

They set to work with great energy to make the pemmican, for Fritz had soon gained his three brothers over to his side. The meat was cut, pounded, seasoned and spiced, and one would have said that a party of twenty people were being supplied for half a year's journey. The second day when they had a quantity of the pemmican made I rather checked their enthusiasm by tasting it, but I did not find it absolutely bad.

Afterwards the boys prepared some bags, at the bottom of which they placed little baskets for the carriage of birds; made different sorts of snares and traps in wire, and got ready all kinds of devices which were mysteries to me. Our old sledge was also pressed into the service; it had been fixed with gun-carriage wheels, and was now chosen as it could be more easily laden. It was made ready and thoroughly cleaned, and, the day before that fixed for our departure, it was filled with provisions of all kinds, the tent, Fritz's boat, without counting a number of other things.

At length the long-wished for day dawned, and every one was on foot very early. I noticed that Jack carried two pairs of pigeons and placed them carefully in the baskets; they were of that species of pigeon called by Buffon, "Turks."

I now pressed the young people to get away as soon as they could. Their mother expressed her wish to get about her household duties as quickly as possible, and Ernest, who had already spent some time with Fritz and Jack, declared that he preferred not to make one of the expedition. I also decided to remain at home and to take advantage of the opportunity to finish with Ernest's assistance the sugar mill or press, which my wife was so anxious to have.

As all had been ready for some hours, we took leave of the three little sunburnt faces after giving them quite a chapter of good advice and suggestions, to which they did not appear to pay any great attention. An instant after, we saw Fritz and Frank mount their steeds and Jack bestride his ostrich, then they galloped across the new drawbridge with a noise which awoke the echoes of the rocks and disturbed the fowls in the neighbourhood.

I lost no time in setting up my sugar mill, which consisted of three vertical cylinders something like a "press," which I intended to work with the assistance of the dogs or perhaps of the bull. I do not think it necessary to go into minute detail respecting the making of the mill; suffice it to say that its construction occupied me some days, that Ernest helped me, and even my wife occasionally rendered her assistance.

But it will be easy enough to follow our young hunters in their expe-

dition, and I will give a succinct narrative of their adventures, or rather I will give an abridged account of their proceedings as related by themselves on their return.

It seems they descended into the Waldegg district where they wished to remain for that day and the following one. As they approached the farm they heard, to their great surprise, a sound like shouts of human laughter, and the animals they rode at the same moment showed by their impatient movements that they feared something extraordinary.

The dogs put their tails between their legs, growled and kept close to their young masters. The ostrich took to flight at once and carried its



rider away to the river, near the Waldegg Lake. The horrible laughter was heard from time to time, and so much so that the terror of the animals could no longer be sustained, and it was not safe to ride them, so the boys dismounted and held a consultation as to what was to be done.

"There must be something over there," said Fritz ; " the beasts are as agitated as if there were a lion or tiger hiding yonder. I can lead them back for a short distance and I will quiet them while you creep forward and see what has caused the alarm, Frank, and see if you can, with the assistance of the dogs, discover what the thing is, but mind you

come back at once at the first sign of anything suspicious. If you see anything alarming we will mount and return to the house and see what we can do then. It is a pity that Jack's steed has taken the bit between his teeth ; I cannot see anything of him whatever."

Frank immediately looked to his weapons and got them in order, called up the dogs, and glided silently towards the thicket whence the sounds had proceeded. The lad had moved forward for about eighty yards, bent almost double and in perfect silence, when he perceived in an opening in the brushwood thirty or forty paces in front of him, an enormous hyæna which had sprung upon a ram, and which was now standing upon the carcase and devouring him with ensanguined jaws.

Although the wild beast could plainly see the youthful hunter, it did not for a moment cease its horrible meal, but went on calmly feeding, saluting Frank only with a shout of mocking laughter, which electrified the boy. He immediately stepped behind a neighbouring tree, and leaning against the trunk he took aim at the hyæna. At the same moment, the dogs, uttering a furious yell, darted at the fierce animal and were received by him with a sullen howl, and then by a horrible snarling roar. At that moment Frank fired, and with such good aim that the bullet struck one of his fore paws, and glancing off, entered his chest, making a deep wound.

Fritz who had succeeded meantime, but not without much trouble, in tethering the animals to a tree, arrived at this juncture and ran to his brother's assistance with his loaded gun. But fortunately his services were not required, for the two brave dogs seeing their advantage, seized their adversary with such fury, attacking him on both sides at once, that he had quite enough to do to defend himself from their onslaught, and had no time to spare to turn his attention to the hunters in the bush. Fritz would have willingly fired, but all the combatants were so mingled in the fray that he would have run a great risk, if he had fired, of killing one of the dogs rather than the hyæna.

It was therefore necessary to wait for a favourable moment. The two mastiffs fought so bravely that the enemy, weakened by his wounds and his exertions, soon bit the dust. Fritz and Frank pressed forward at once to the field of battle, where they found the hyæna dead, the teeth of one of the dogs being buried in his neck, while the other one held him by the head. The boys were obliged to open the dogs' teeth with a stick to get them away from their prey, and even then they kept running round and round growling savagely, and looking with longing eyes at the hyæna, gnashing their teeth with rage.

The two boys set up a loud hurrah, called the dogs to them, caressed them, examined their wounds, washed them with hydromel and water, and rubbed them afterwards with bears' grease, which they had brought in.

case of accidents. At this moment Jack returned, after he had, with some difficulty, extricated his ostrich from the marsh, and induced him to return to the scene of the conflict. He was greatly surprised to see the size of the conquered foe, which wore a very terrible aspect. The hyæna was almost as large as a wild boar, with its mane bristling with long hairs. His snout resembled that of a wolf; but its ears were smaller and more pointed than those of the latter animal. The tail was pointed, the limbs nervous and muscular, the paws strong and well armed with claws, and the dogs would have had no easy matter to conquer him, if he had not been previously wounded, which rendered his capture more easy. Frank declared that this quarry was his own particular booty, and his two brothers willingly accorded him the glory, and very justly so too.

This adventure over, the young people transported their luggage to Waldegg, which was not far distant; and having unloaded the sledge and placed all their goods under cover, they returned with the empty sledge for the carcase of the hyæna, which they set about cleaning and skinning with great assiduity. This work, interrupted occasionally by the attacks of birds from the neighbouring trees, sufficiently occupied them during the rest of the day; but in the evening they found time to despatch a carrier pigeon home, after which they went to bed upon our two best bear-skins, which the little Sybarites had carried with them for that purpose.

Not very long after that time, we were seated with Ernest in the arbour, having finished our task at Felsenheim, and were speaking of our bold huntsmen. Ernest made some enigmatical allusions to them. Their mother feared something might be the matter; though I was full of confidence in the good sense, judgment, and courage of Fritz. At length, to my great surprise, Ernest said,—

“To-morrow morning, my dear parents, I hope to be able to communicate to you the latest, and at the same time very satisfactory, intelligence concerning the three absentees.”

“Really,” I replied, “do you intend to pay them a visit, then? I should hardly think that could be accomplished, for they must have travelled a long distance to-day; and besides, I shall want your assistance to-morrow.”

“I shall remain here,” replied Ernest; “but I trust, nevertheless, to give you some news of our pilgrims to-morrow. Who knows? Perhaps I have dreamt something about them to-day and what they are doing at the present time.”

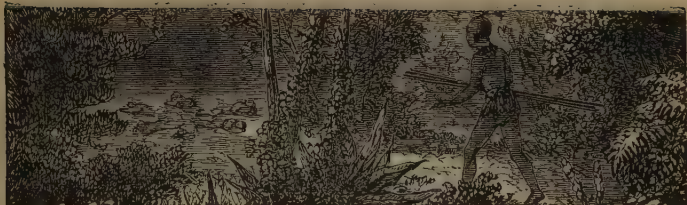
“Oh, I thank you in advance for your thoughts. If dreams and pre-sentiments could relieve us from anxiety, as a wife and mother, I have the first right to them; for my heart has followed the absent ones.”

"Hallo," I exclaimed, "look at that belated pigeon, which has just come home. The twilight prevents me from seeing whether it is one of our own or a stranger."

"I will go," said Ernest, "and let the trap fall, and to-morrow we will see what the late comer is. The moment he has chosen for his arrival is a coincidence. It would be a curious thing, papa, if a post from Sydney, in New Holland, were to arrive here. One day you spoke to us about the probable proximity of this colony."

"That is a joke, my dear Ernest," I replied; "and, nevertheless, what appears almost impossible may come true; but we had better go to bed now, and to-morrow morning early you shall give an audience to this courier from New Holland, and regale us with his intelligence at breakfast, or you may give our love to your brothers, if you should happen to visit them in your sleep. Good night. I hope you will sleep as well as I intend to do."





CHAPTER XLIX.

A Letter by Carrier.—News from Fritz.—Black Swans.—The Tapir.—The Cranes.—Birds of Paradise.



ERNEST was on foot very early in the morning ; for when I was getting up, I saw him coming down from the dove-cote. When we called him in to breakfast he entered very gravely, with a large paper in his hand, folded up like a government dispatch. He addressed us, after making a low bow, in the tone of a junior clerk who makes a report. "The post-master of your dominion at Felsenheim has the honour to inform you that he is not able to send the dispatches for Waldegg and Sydney, in Jackson's Bay, before this morning, as the post arrived too late last night."

His mother and myself began to laugh at the solemnity of his appearance ; and as I naturally thought it was all a joke, I answered gaily,—

"Well, Mr. Secretary, what is the news from our capital ? Let us hear what you have learnt from our subjects or friends ?"

Ernest immediately unfolded the dispatch, which had been written in advance, and read as follows :—

"The Governor-general of New Wales to the Governor of Felsenheim, Falcon's Nest, Waldegg, Sugar Top, greeting.

WELL-BELOVED AND DEAR GOVERNOR,—We learn with some displeasure that quite recently thirty men, as we suppose, have departed from your colony to live on the product of their hunting, which will do great wrong to these provinces. It is also come to our ears that hyænas, as dangerous as they are terrible, have invaded our state, and that they have already caused great panic amongst the domestic animals of the colonists.

"In consequence of these things, we beg you to repress this disorder, to recall the hunters and freebooters in question, and also to put a stop to the ravages of the hyænas, by taking the necessary steps to hunt down and destroy these ferocious animals.

"Wishing you all prosperity, I have the honour, &c.

"PHILIP PHILIPSON, Governor.

"Given at Sidney Cove, in the Bay of Jackson, this 12th month and the 34th year of the colony."

I wished to pick up a note he had dropped, but he darted upon it, and said: "This is only one of the private letters from Waldegg, but I have no objection to read it to your lordships, as it may perhaps contain more trustworthy details of Sir Philip, who appears to have given credit to exaggerated reports of the deserters from this colony."

"You are talking in riddles, Ernest," I said. "Did Fritz leave a letter which ought to have been given to me yesterday, and he may perhaps have discovered the traces of a hyæna in our neighbourhood?"

"No indeed, papa, it was a carrier pigeon which brought this letter, very late last night, and if it had not been so dark up in the dove-cot I should have been able to tell you yesterday evening what my brothers were doing and how they were getting on."

"That is a very good idea indeed," I replied, "and may be very useful to us. But what is this about the hyæna, you can scarcely have evolved all that from your poetical imagination?"



"You shall know all about it," he replied. "I will just read you the little letter, word for word."

"DEAR PARENTS AND DEAR ERNEST,—

"An enormous hyæna has killed two lambs and a ram, but our dogs attacked it. Frank wounded it seriously, and we succeeded in killing it. We have passed almost all the day in taking off the skin, which is very beautiful. Our pemmican is not very nice. I hope you are all as well as your sons and brothers, who are safe and sound. With love.

"WALDEGG, 15th.

"Your affectionate FRITZ."

"Ha, ha, ha, that is a regular hunter's letter," I exclaimed. "Heaven be praised that the encounter with the hyæna has passed off so well. But I wonder how this beast can have got into our territory; it must have made a passage very recently through our palisade, without that it would have been a long time before it would have got hold of our lambs and goats."

"I do hope the boys will be prudent," said my wife. "I wish we could recall them. Would it not be wiser to go after them?"

"I think," said Ernest, "that it would be much better to wait patiently, dear mother, for this evening I expect we shall have another messenger, who will set all our fears at rest."

"That is certainly the best thing to do," I added; "for if we go after them, we run the risk of missing them altogether."

In fact towards evening, a little earlier than on the day before, we perceived another carrier pigeon coming. Immediately he had entered the dove-cot, Ernest let fall the trap and went up to secure him. The boy quickly descended with a note which he found under the bird's wing. He read to us the following laconic report:—

"The night has passed quietly.
The morning is very fine.
We have been upon the Waldegg Lake in the kaiak.
We have captured some black swans.
We have also caught a royal eagle.
We have put to flight in the marsh some unknown animal.
To-morrow we go to Prospect Hill.
Take care of yourselves.

"Your affectionate

"FRITZ, JACK, AND FRANK.



BLACK SWAN.

This note set our fears at rest, since it informed us that the night had been quiet, so that we thought there could be no more hyænas in the neighbourhood, for they always prowl at night like other wild beasts. The rest of the contents of the note were riddles to me, but the verbal reports of the boys when they return cleared all this up.

My three sons had formed a plan to survey the lake of Waldegg in every sense of the term, and to take note, above all things, of those spots where they could approach the water without the risk of being engulfed in the swamp. With this object in view, Fritz had taken his kaiak, and had coasted along, while his brothers had proceeded along the bank, and appeared each time when Fritz made them a signal with a handkerchief attached to a bamboo. They thus marked out the places which were favourable for landing, by means of bushes and reeds attached to stakes.

On the same occasion Fritz endeavoured to procure some live black swans. Having carried with him for this purpose a bamboo, to which he had fastened some wire loops, he endeavoured to approach these swans, but they were not so stupid as to wait for him, and he thought himself very fortunate to capture three cygnets.

In order to take these uninjured, he threw the loops round their feet, and then passing the bamboo to his brothers on shore, drew the birds to land, and soon mastered them by tying their wings and bandaging their eyes. It would have been imprudent to have attacked the older birds, for they can hit very hard. The cygnets were easily carried to Felsenheim, where their wings were cut, and they looked quite ornamental swimming about in our bay.

The new captives had just been secured, the wire snares returned to Fritz, and his brothers were going along the bank, when they saw all at once rise from the reeds a beautiful neck, surmounted by a magnificent tufted head, which they rightly believed to belong to an immense royal eagle. Fritz hastened to throw the snares over him, and pushed his kaiak into the reeds, so as to have a starting point from which he could throw it with some force, but when he had wound the loops round him, the poor bird, which was half-stifled, became so docile that his wings were bound, and his eyes bandaged without difficulty. Fritz then fastened him to the deck, and pushed to land as quickly as possible.

While all the boys were standing round this beautiful bird and admiring him, an immense animal rose up from the reeds and passed close by them. His appearance and heavy tread frightened them considerably. They depicted him about the size of a colt, of a brown colour, and in form something like a young rhinoceros, but without any horn on his nose, and having a thin elongated upper lip. From this description I recognised the American tapir, an inoffensive inhabitant of the great river swamps of America.

But before the boys had recovered their presence of mind and called in the dogs, the animal had disappeared into the marsh amongst the reeds. Jack and Frank not being able to reach him by land, returned towards Waldegg with the cygnets, while Fritz pursued the fugitive in

his canoe, but could not find him. Just then a whole flight of cranes arrived, screaming and making a great noise with their wings, and alighted close to the river where Jack and Frank were passing. The boys immediately seized, not their firearms, but their bows and arrows, which they had carried with them for such an occasion as this. Thus equipped, they approached the cranes which were busily engaged picking up some grains of rice.

With the assistance of these primitive weapons, the little archers



THE TAPIR.

secured four or five of these beautiful birds, amongst which, on a close examination, we discovered two fine *Numidian Maidens* which had accompanied the cranes, though these were not probably the only specimens in the flock.

Fritz, unsuccessful in his chase after the tapir, rejoined his brothers at Waldegg, and was surprised at their success, and had even some trouble to repress a little temper that he had not been able to take part in it.

This feeling of jealousy and ambition gave him no rest until he had gone out on a similar exploit with his eagle, so he set out with his dogs and gun to seek some distinguished prey. He had walked for about a quarter of an hour, when the dogs flushed a whole flock of birds like pheasants, which flew into the plain, and there perched on the branches of the lowest trees and regarded the young man evidently with great astonishment. He immediately launched his eagle in pursuit of them. The sight of the latter caused the birds to drop to the ground and hide



themselves in the herbage and shrubs. One of the fugitives became the prey of the sanguinary king of birds, while another was so petrified by fear that he allowed himself to be caught alive by Fritz. A third was taken in the snares attached to the bamboo. This was the most beautiful one of all, and distinguished by a tail of two feet long composed of many feathers. They particularly remarked two large and two narrow curved plumes which grew in the centre of the tail, and were of brown and orange colour in the centre, terminating in a black tint at the end.

This bird was the celebrated bird of Paradise, the companion of which, being smaller, and with a less beautiful tail, appeared to be the female.

Soon after dinner to our great surprise another messenger arrived on the wings of the wind. Its unexpected arrival excited our fears. The contents of this new letter really alarmed us very much. This is what we read :—

“The passage of the Klus is forced. All is destroyed as far as Sugar-top. The woodhouse is broken. The sugar-canes are torn up and bruised, while the millet-field is devastated. We have seen three great holes as if caused by cannon shot, and the traces of footmarks as big as plates. So hasten dear father to come to our assistance. We do not dare to move backwards or forwards. We do not feel strong enough to brave the danger, nor to repair the damage, otherwise we are very well, and have not yet been attacked.”



It can easily be imagined that this news made me jump up at once. I ran to saddle the onagra, and to give my wife the necessary instructions to follow me with Ernest the next morning, and to bring the wagon, which would carry all that would be necessary for a long stay, and she could have the cow and the young ass to draw the chariot. Recommending my wife and son to the protection of Heaven, I jumped upon my steed and started at a gallop.

This pace could not last long, and I was obliged to let the onagra reduce his speed to a trot if I did not wish to knock him up. I nevertheless accomplished the distance of five or six leagues in two hours and a half, or rather less. My sons were very much surprised to see me arrive so soon, and were delighted at my appearance. I inspected the depredation, and found everywhere, to my great terror, such destruction as could have been caused by no other animals but elephants. The heavy planks we had put up as a barricade had been torn down like so much straw, and the trees, on the side of which we had hoped to build our new house, were stripped from top to bottom. Amongst the bamboos the young plants were either broken or torn up. But the ravages made amongst the sugar-canes was even more terrible, for they had all been either eaten, trampled under foot, or otherwise destroyed. It appeared to me as if a couple of hippopotami had come to the assistance of a troop of elephants, for I found some traces of smaller feet, but of less shapely form, which were lost towards the mouth of the river. The arbor at Sugar-top had been entirely destroyed and the wood house knocked to pieces.

I paid particular attention to all the footmarks, to see if any small wild beasts had been amongst them, but I could see nothing suspicious except traces of the wolf or dog. These, I suppose, were the tracks of the hyæna which Frank had killed, and it was some consolation not to be able to find any other suspicious traces.

We pitched our tent without delay and collected a quantity of wood, so as to keep up a good fire all night to protect us from the attacks of the elephants. We had not a very quiet night, for Fritz and I passed more than a quarter of it talking by the fire while we kept watch. However, no attack was made upon us, and morning came without any alarm having reached us. About midday my wife and Ernest arrived with the cart drawn by the cow and the donkey, and we immediately made arrangements for a long stay. Our first proceeding was to rebuild our palisades, but of this I need not give a detailed description. Suffice it is to say that it occupied us for a whole month without cessation.





CHAPTER I.

A House on Posts.—New Discoveries.—Jack's Fright.—The Sultan Cock.—The Hippopotamus.—The Jaguar.—Our Fortifications on Shark Island.



THE fortification was not the only work to which we set ourselves. It had now become necessary to think of some house of an enduring character in the neighbourhood, and the plan we determined upon was a habitation of the Kam-schatkan fashion, upon four pillars only, with the difference that, in this instance, the pillars were represented by four trees, which we found growing together almost in a perfect square, about twelve feet each side. This was a species of plaintain with a very straight trunk, along which a climbing plant had been growing until lately torn away by the trunk of an elephant.

We united these trees together with bamboo planks about twenty feet from the ground, and between them we established a solid palisade, which was strengthened on all four sides by a wall of reeds about three feet high, in which we pierced embrasures. The roof was pointed and covered with bark of trees, and sloped so as to let the rain run off. For a staircase we arranged a plank with steps, something like the planks used to go on board of a vessel. We could raise this plank perpendicularly by causing it to work against another horizontal beam fixed in the wall. The plank, which served as a ladder, had also steps cut in it underneath, which worked in the teeth of a cogged wheel that we turned by means of a crank, and which caused the ladder to ascend and descend in the same manner as is effected with ordinary pulleys. When the ladder was pulled up to the top it opened a trap in the ceiling, which gave forth upon a sort of terrace, from which one could see a

long distance found. If one wished to descend, the ladder was passed through a trap to the floor of our little room.

Between the four trunks of the trees we fixed planks of cocoa-nut wood to the height of about six feet, and formed a sort of flooring, upon which we could shelter the beasts or the fowls, and for this purpose we placed near the entrance a manger and a trough. Finally, we fitted up the interval between the walls with thin bamboo laths, which crossed each other diagonally in a sort of lattice work. We ornamented the whole with some decorative work *à la Chinoise*, and as we had left on the trees all the exterior branches, and had even spared some which stretched across the ceiling in our little room, the whole effect was not unlike a little chalet or even an aviary.

This little house proved very useful to us, and we shut up the fowls in it also. They found the space rather limited at first, but they were more easy to tame in consequence of the close proximity to ourselves, and soon they allowed themselves to be fed, and submitted entirely to the state of domesticity. This was particularly the case with the swans, which remained whole days in the neighbouring ponds enjoying themselves in the water. The beautiful bird of paradise became very tame, I might say almost sociable, but as its splendid tail got crushed and dirty in the confined space in which he lived, I cut it off, and the poor bird presented a very comical appearance in consequence. We consoled ourselves, however, with the reflection that this appendage would grow again after the moulting season.

My sons made a great many new discoveries in their various expeditions. One day Fritz brought from the other side of the East River some cucumbers, as he thought, but they did not taste very nice. He had fastened them on to a fascine of reeds, and dragged it after him through the water. In the larger of these so-called cucumbers I recognised the precious cacao, and in the smaller specimens the bananas, which are so useful, and almost indispensable, in certain countries. The first taste of these, however, was not much to our liking. The cocoa beans are found in the midst of a species of gelatine, which can only be compared to thick cream in appearance, but which has a flavourless sort of taste, and the beans themselves are very bitter, so we immediately put them on one side. The bananas we liked better, though they were rather tasteless, and had somewhat the flavour of over-ripe pears.

On the eve of our departure, Fritz received from his mother an injunction to bring back these two objects, and to take notice of, or to collect, everything that seemed to strike him in the way of natural productions on the other side of the river. Accompanied by the good wishes of all, he embarked in his kaiak, and, in order to carry out the

commission with which he was intrusted, he took with him a sort of raft of reeds, and towed it behind his boat.

This raft proved very useful, for Fritz returned in the evening with it so laden that it was quite deep in the water, and its contents were half immersed in consequence.

In the twinkling of an eye, his three brothers had descended to the margin of the water, and set about unloading the treasures he had collected. This occupation gave them no less pleasure than if the raft had been a frigate laden with gold. Ernest and Frank immediately carried their bundles towards our forest home, while Fritz gave Jack a damp sack in which we noticed some extraordinary movement. Jack immediately jumped behind a bush, so that we could not see him, and there he carefully opened a sack, but soon cried out in terror, "Oh, it makes my flesh creep, but I do not thank you any the less for having thought of my commission." He hid the sack in a narrow spot, leaving it half in the water, and took it out of hiding when we went away, so that we were only aware of the incident by its consequences. Finally, Fritz jumped ashore with a great bird, which he had tied up, and presented it to us with a smile of satisfaction.

I at once recognised the sultan cock, as Buffon calls it, the most beautiful of all water-fowls, with long legs and red feet, with a red patch in front of the head, but the rest of a brilliant violet, and upon the back a deep green, its neck of a brownish red; in a word, it was a most beautiful bird, and so tame that it was quickly domesticated. My wife was alarmed with this continual increase in her poultry yard, but the beauty of the new comer pleaded in its favour, and she finally consented to its reception.

Fritz then told us about the most remarkable things he had seen in his journey along the river, and spoke to us of the extraordinary fertility of the soil on the opposite bank, from whence the mountains sprung, and the majesty of the thick forest which bordered the stream. The cries of the various birds had almost turned his head. He had ascended the river still farther than the Buffalo Marsh, and there he had captured the sultan cock by means of his wire springes. Farther on in a mimosa forest he had perceived a troop of elephants, numbering about twenty, which were tearing down the branches, and putting whole heaps of grass in their mouths at once, as they wallowed in the marsh; others waded into the stream, and discharged the water over their backs from their trunks, to refresh themselves in the terrible heat which prevailed. They paid no attention to the young voyager or his boat. At another place some magnificent panthers came to quench their thirst in the river, their beautiful skins glistening in the sun.

"For a moment I experienced a very great desire to try my skill

upon some of these animals," said Fritz; "but as I was quite alone, I thought the risk would be too great, and I finished by feeling very



much afraid, and I retired as quickly as possible, a new inducement, at the same instant, contributing to this result. I saw at some distance from me, in a marshy place, the water begin to boil and foam, and in an

instant afterwards, I perceived the snout of a black and horrid-looking animal emerge slowly, but forcibly, from the river, and saluted me with a horrible, half-neighing noise, at the same time it displayed a mouth garnished with formidable teeth, which appeared to be arranged in the jaws like *chevaux-de-frise*. Without waiting to see any more, I made a half-turn to the right, and dashed into the current of the river. I rowed with all my force, perspiration pouring from my forehead, and I did not cease my exertions till I thought I was well out of reach of the monster. I then fastened up my raft, which I had left concealed on the other bank as I went up, and returned here as quickly as I could, but still in a great fright. For the moment I did not care about any more discoveries, for I was quite alone and had not even one of my brave dogs to defend me."

Such is an abridgment of Fritz's journal, which gave us much food for thought, for it assured us of the vicinity of numerous and very ferocious beasts. There was no mistaking the hippopotamus in the monster he described as rising so suddenly from the water; but, on the other hand, we were glad to see such evidences of fortunate discoveries, particularly in the vegetable way, which Fritz had brought from the other bank.

During all that day, while Fritz was away on this excursion, we had been occupied preparing for our departure next morning, and we had packed up and placed in the cart everything that was not absolutely necessary for our supper and for the night. Fritz asked and obtained permission to return by water; he expected to double Cape Disappointment, and to reach Felsenheim by the coast. I consented the more willingly, as I knew he was very cautious, and besides, I wanted to know if it were possible to double the promontory.

We were all astir in good time in the morning. The promontory appeared to the courageous navigator very sterile and precipitous on the seaward side, and covered with all kinds of sea birds. Numerous bushes which exhaled pleasant odours grew in the crevices of the rocks and amongst the boulders which had fallen from the cliffs. The flowers were small and white, the leaves were heart-shaped, and the stems very prickly. The promontory towards the south was not less rocky, but the boulders were not so large. However, this side also was covered with flowers.

Fritz had brought back a specimen of the two different kinds of trees, and, after a lengthened examination, I was able to decide that the former plant was the caper, while the second appeared to me a species of the Chinese tea-plant, which is but a shrub.

This decision was received by my wife with great joy.

Jack had arrived at Felsenheim nearly an hour before us; he had crossed the drawbridge, and continued his route on the ostrich as far as

the Ducks' Marsh, where he partially sunk his mysterious sack, which Fritz had told him to do. Fritz had been detained at Cape Disappointment, and did not arrive until some time after us.

Meantime, my wife and I, Ernest and Frank, had finished our journey without any incident, and hastened to unload our cart. I was then struck by the great number of our fowls, for one could not help feeling that they would injure our grain crops during our absence. I set about their distribution; the new arrivals, such as the turkeys and the cranes, were transported to the two little neighbouring islands. We placed the black swans, the sultan cock, the royal eagle, and the Numidian crane



THE HIPPOPOTAMUS.

near the Ducks' Marsh, where we hoped to retain them by presenting them with occasional dainties. Our old inhabitants of the poultry yard preserved their ancient privilege of being always near us, and even joined our repasts when we took them in the open air. The arrangements occupied me for a couple of hours, while my wife prepared dinner, pending Fritz's arrival.

Towards evening, when we were quietly seated in our arbour, and just as Fritz was giving us an account of his voyage, we heard all of a sudden, in the direction of the Ducks' Marsh, a hoarse, roaring noise, not unlike thunder, sometimes near, sometimes more distant, so that the

dogs got quite excited and barked loudly, and even the two bulls, Sturm and Brummer, who were in the grotto, joined in the horrible concert.

I jumped up with a bound, and told Jack to get my rifle. My wife, as well as Ernest and Frank, was evidently alarmed, while Fritz, who is usually so very quick to take up his weapons, remained unmoved, an almost imperceptible smile curling the corners of his mouth. This composure assured me. I sat down again, and said,—



THE JAGUAR.

"I have no doubt this noise proceeds from a bittern or wild boar ; 'the mountain has brought forth a mouse' it seems, so we need not trouble ourselves to take up arms."

"Perhaps," said Fritz, "it is a serenade which those immense frogs of Jack's are making, and no doubt they have very good voices."

"Aha !" I replied, "this is our little fellow's joke, is it ? This is why he came back so mysteriously before us all. Since he has hoped to

frighten us by this trick it is only fair that we should retaliate. Let us all pretend to be very much frightened when he returns." When he made his appearance the other boys immediately began to run about feigning the greatest terror, and acting their parts to perfection. Some ran for their guns, Fritz stood on tiptoe, rolling his eyes about, and peering into the distance. When Jack approached, Fritz exclaimed, "I see it, I see it!"

"What is it?" asked Jack.

"A beautiful jaguar; don't you hear his growl as he bounds along?"

"Where is he bounding?" asked Jack in a low tone.

"Down there by the marsh," replied Fritz; "but he ran away when he saw our dogs. I believe he is hiding in the brushwood, but the reeds conceal him from us."

Jack asked if we intended to pursue him.

"Most certainly," I replied; "his skin will make us a most excellent covering, and as you are armed you can accompany us in our expedition."

"I did not know what the horrible roaring was," continued Jack.

"All the more reason," said I, interrupting him, "that we should start at once. Fritz and Jack can go first with the dogs; Frank and I will form a second detachment. Your mother and Ernest will bring up the rear."

Jack, terribly frightened, sidled up to Ernest, and drawing him apart, asked him, almost with tears in his eyes, what sort of an animal a jaguar was.

"It is the American tiger," replied Ernest; "its colour is red, it is called the *Felis concolor*, it has——"

"Has it," cried Jack; "I do not want to hear any more. I will stay where I am."

At these words he fled precipitously. Fritz, shouting with laughter, cried after him, "Here Jack, Jack, we must set out."

But his brother did not even turn his head, but ran right into the grotto. He appeared in a few moments, pale with affright at one of the windows, and thrust his head half out, to see what was going on. We all returned to our arbour very much delighted at having taken in the little man who wished to play us a trick.

We heard from time to time the new chorus, but this time it only had the effect of croaking of frogs, and I knew that Fritz had brought two bull frogs back with him at Jack's particular request.

Some days after this, when we had quite recovered from the fatigues of our last excursion, my wife asked me to set about the repair of our ancient palace of Falcon's Nest, before it fell to pieces, for its construc-

tion had never been entirely finished: To this I willingly consented, as I was also of opinion that we should keep up our two houses. We therefore started for Falcon's Nest. It was necessary to leave two of the boys, to occupy themselves in finishing the "Lick," which they had commenced. It was soon completed, and offered to us the advantage of seeing without been seen, and when hidden in the bushes to notice the animals which came down to drink, and gave us the opportunity to trap them when we desired to do so.

We worked hard at our palace in the tree, and everything went as well as could be wished under the circumstances.

After having cut away the most knotty and troublesome roots, we made use of others to form round the house a species of terrace, which, with a mixture of resin and loam, we rendered impenetrable to the water. We covered the top of our house with neatly joined strips of bark. We put up two nice little balconies, and ran a parapet and railing all round, so that our habitation became very pleasant, and not at all like an ill-shapen bird's nest.

The execution of a plan which Fritz was often bringing forward to secure our safety followed this embellishment of our little house,—he wished to construct and place a battery upon Shark Island. It was not without trouble and much thought that we devised the means to transport the cannon to its destination. We first took it on board our boat and carried it to the island. On the summit of the rock I had fixed a capstan with the necessary tackle, and attached to it a thick cable, well knotted at intervals, so that if it were suspended from the rock, it would serve us as a ladder when required.

This capstan, which was able to sustain the weight of the cannon, rendered us great service. We very soon had everything ready for the execution of our project, and the cannon was at length hauled up and turned towards the sea. We built behind the gun a sort of watch tower, very lightly constructed of planks and bamboo, and at some paces behind that we fixed a flag, which could be changed at will; a white flag being the signal for the approach of harmless visitors, and a red flag when anything of a dangerous or suspicious nature was approaching.

When this laborious undertaking was accomplished after the space of two months, we celebrated the happy event by hoisting the white flag and saluting it with six guns, the echoes of which came back majestically from the cliffs of Felsenheim.





CHAPTER LI.

A Retrospect.—Our Houses.—Our Defences.—Our Gardens and Plantations.—Spices, Fruits, etc.—A Turkey Hunt.—The Antelopes.—Quite Contented.



It is with a sort of fear that I glance back over the preceding pages, which I have successively filled with the history of my family in this distant island. I have thought how greatly the narrative extends, and does it contain interest enough for me to continue at the same rate? Modesty bids me stop, for there is a medium in every thing.

But so as not to pass to the denouement too suddenly, I will attempt, after having taken a retrospection over the ten years of our sojourn in this desert island, to relate some events and some adventures of a more recent epoch. At the same time, I must observe that notwithstanding that my sons got older, their spirits and minds were almost as young as ever, while they knew more than many men considerably more aged than they.

Those who have taken an interest in our adventures will be glad to learn by what dispensation of Providence we were again brought into contact with the world, and how my family beheld the cheerful and happy future open out before them. By the help of Providence we had enjoyed, during our ten years' trial, unmerited happiness. Would that the future may be equally pleasant.

Our houses at Felsenheim and Falcon's Nest were very pleasant and commodious, and what is better still, very healthy. The former offered an excellent depôt for all our provisions, and served as a winter residence. Falcon's Nest, on the contrary, was our usual summer abode or residence during the fine weather. We there had arranged fowl-houses, and stables for our sheep and goats, as well as pens for the game we wished to keep alive. The beehives were placed there in the branches of the great tree. We had also taken care to breed some

pigeons at Falcon's Nest, by suspending here and there in the branches large calabashes with holes cut so that the pigeons might roost. The birds took to their aerial habitations very willingly, and built their nests in them. Above each nest we fixed a little roof to keep the rain off. We were so happy with regard to our bees that we usually had only just the trouble to take the honey without swarming them. They multiplied of themselves, so long as we took care to place our simply constructed hives out on the finest days after the rainy season. But this increase of the bees attracted a number of the birds called bee eaters, which are very fond of these little animals. The sight of these pretty and active birds was at first very interesting, but we soon had to put a stop to their ravages, which we did by placing birdlime around the hives. In fact, more than one bee was also caught, but we caught the bee eaters too for our Natural History Museum, the additions to which interested us very much, particularly on Sundays.

At Felsenheim there were a great many improvements and alterations. The covered gallery, commenced some time previously, was now



BEE EATER.

finished and roofed in, and was supported upon fourteen pretty bamboo columns. The manilla and the pepper plant climbed around these pillars in a most picturesque manner. An attempt which we had made to train vines round the posts had failed, because of the great heat of the sun, but the tropical plants succeeded so well that we were always able to pick our own spices.

We usually sat in this gallery by the side of a fountain, which continually played into the large turtle-shell, and we used to rest there of an evening after our work; we often supped there, and deliberated as to our movements for the next day.

At the other extremity of the gallery where the arbour was, there was a fountain which we had established for the sake of symmetry, but which only played through a bamboo cane until such times as we could catch

another large turtle. The water from these fountains irrigated our plantations by means of bamboo tubes.

I had given a sort of Chinese appearance to the two wings of the gallery, which formed a sort of covering over the fountains, so they looked like two separate cabinets. Two wide gradients led up to the gallery, except in the middle, where we had left a space for a door. The gallery was paved with a kind of soft stone, but which had now become quite hard by exposure to the air.

The large ostriches walked about gravely amongst the trees and bushes until they were annoyed or frightened, when they fled away at the top of their speed. The cranes and the turkeys remained generally in the fields, while the birds of Paradise made friends with the fowls, but the Canadian and the grouse made their nests in the high grass. The most beautiful of the pigeons often came cooing on our gallery, or sat on the roof and plumed themselves. In fact we were surrounded with so much life and movement that we compared our poultry yard to an earthly paradise.

This beautiful place was bounded on the right by the Jackal River, the high bank of which was abundantly covered with citron trees, wild oranges, Indian figs, palm trees, etc., so thick that a mouse scarcely could penetrate it. On the left were inaccessible ravines, amongst which lay the crystal grotto; and the great Duck Marsh divided us so completely from the sea-shore, which extended in that direction, that it would have been useless to have erected any fortifications. The horrible noises made by the bull-frogs were heard above all the other noises of the marsh, and disturbed the calmness of the place; but we put up with this concert in consideration of the nice dishes the members of it furnished for our table. We had also made near the marsh a plantation of bamboos, which, as well as the reeds, we found very useful.

Behind us was a wall of high rocks so steep that it quite shut us off from any attack from the interior of the island. The only means of communication dry-shod was across the drawbridge over the Jackal River; for safety's sake this bridge was generally raised up, and for greater security we kept our guns mounted there. Two other cannon were also placed behind a solid parapet, and commanded an entry to the bay, and the same number with two culverins were placed on board our largest boat—the pinnace.

Our gardens and plantations, as well as our field, extended from our grotto to the source of the Jackal River. Our largest field was on the opposite side of the stream, but within sight. A palisade of bamboos and cactus ran in a straight line from our gallery along the Jackal River, and served as a rampart for the plantations in places where the rock and the stream did not offer sufficient protection. The interior of this trian-

gular enclosure, with the exception of a small field of corn, and a smaller one of cotton, contained a number of herbs, a sugar-cane plantation, and other vegetables, as well as some European fruit trees. The whole of these were watered by means of the bamboo tubes from the source of the Jackal River. The European fruit trees had succeeded perfectly, with few exceptions. The almonds, nuts, peaches, oranges, and lemons, were good; but we had very few grapes, and those were of a bad quality. The trees in the avenue from Felsenheim to Falcon's Nest had a good effect, and did well, because the leaves were less dry, as they had been refreshed by the sea breeze. I must, however, confess that we estimated the value of our European fruits more from association than from actual good flavour, for many of them, such as the apples, cherries, pears, and plums, did not do so well in this hot climate, and did not last so long as in Switzerland. But on the other hand the oranges and lemons, pine-apples and candle-nuts, compensated for this want.

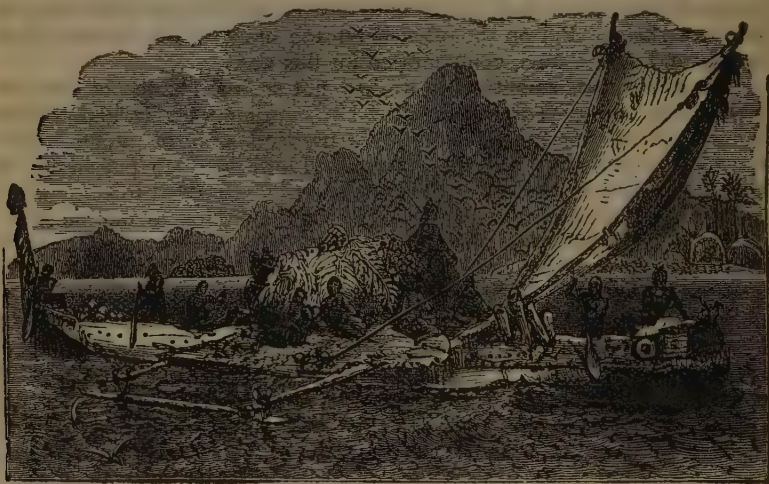
At the commencement, when we had not such a quantity of fruit, we were obliged to wage war against the birds during the day, and against the ravages of the bats by night. We tried all sorts of things—sometimes little wind-mills, sometimes traps and bird line—to put an end to their depredations, but at length it was necessary to resort to gunpowder, and by this severe measure we gained many additions to our museum, as well as material for our hats. But when, later on, our harvest got so abundant, we permitted our two-legged or four-footed robbers to take what they pleased.

But the harvest time was not the only period in which strangers were attracted to our locality. The budding of the trees produced the same effect, and it was principally humming birds which came fluttering about the blossoming trees and which delighted us extremely by their beautiful colours and the sheen of their plumage, as well as by the astonishing rapidity of their movements. It was also a very pretty sight to see these combative little birds attack other birds larger than themselves or those of their own species, and they would also vent their fury on any flower from which the honey had been previously extracted by a bee or other honey-seeking insect. These little birds gave us a great deal of pleasure, and we did all we could to attract them to our habitation by hanging up vessels filled with honey, and by planting beautiful flowers. Some couples did actually build their little round nests in the vanilla plant which climbed around the columns of our gallery. The neighbourhood of the orange and lemon trees, as well as the spices, the perfume of which is a great attraction for these beautiful birds, had probably induced them to remain.

The spice plants, and particularly the nutmegs, repaid us richly for all our trouble. They had grown up mingled with the bananas at the very

entrance of our harbour, and we inhaled a balsamic odour when we reposed in the evening after our work, or when employed in some domestic task. But this plantation also attracted some strangers, and particularly some species of birds of Paradise, which displayed a magnificence of plumage worthy of their name, as well as a voracity of appetite and a discordancy of voice which was anything but Elysian; but they took their departure at the very sight of some birds of prey which we had nailed up upon the trees.

Our olive trees suffered least from the birds. We had two species of olives. We collected the larger kind before they were ripe, and



BRINGING BREAD FRUIT.

salted them and put them in spice, which removed all traces of bitterness. The other species, which were still more bitter, supplied us with excellent oil. These productions rendered many new arrangements unnecessary. I need only mention the principal ones, and will not enter into any details of their construction, more particularly as they were often imperfect and defective. When we wished to extract the oil from our nuts, almonds, or olives, it was necessary to make a large pestle and mortar for those belonging to the ship's surgery were not sufficiently large. afterwards we were obliged to make a caldron and fireplace to

heat the pulped mass, so that we could get at the oil more easily, and finally we wanted flasks and barrels to keep it in. All these things were not effected without a good deal of head work and manual labour as well as patience and activity, but we managed to make all that we wanted.

The sugar-cane also required a great many utensils in the extraction of the sugar, before we could make any real advance, for hitherto we had been content with a surgeon's pestle and mortar, and with the sugar we extracted by these means, but it got sour and would not keep. I knew very well that all things necessary for the manufacture of sugar had been on board the wreck, but I could not recall what I had done with them. I only knew that I had used the caldrons to store powder in. As several of these had been emptied, they could be put to their original use. We built the four smallest into a sort of hearth to refine the sugar; afterwards, when searching carefully amongst the objects we had saved from the wreck, I discovered also the three metal cylinders, which were indispensable for the sugar-pressing, as well as other necessary utensils. The press was attached with bamboo laths under a perpendicular screw which turned upon itself and communicated with the three cylinders. The screw was put in motion by means of a stick, which traversed it horizontally, to which one of our beasts was attached, and went round and round as in a mill.

A machine of the same kind was established for three other uses. The first was to bruise our hemp in a stone cylinder, instead of beating it as we had hitherto done, and also to crush our olives. Secondly, to press the grapes with a round piece of wood; and finally to pound the cacao, or other substances, with a stone plate, which we had not hitherto done. The bottom part or bowl of this machine was a hollow stone. This stone had a rim about nine inches high, and was placed upon the hearth over the furnace so that we could use the fire when necessary.

The two establishments had been built in the open air, in the space between our drawbridge and Herring Promontory. We afterwards roofed them in, and formed a commodious and useful workshop where we could labour even during the wet season.

I now pass on to Whale Island, which had not been less improved by us than Shark Island. In fact, here we carried on all occupations which were in any way disagreeable, such as curing the fish, making candles, or tanning. The workshop for all these things had been organized under the shade of a projecting rock, which sheltered us from the weather. We divided our attention equally between these islands and Felsenheim and Falcon's Nest, and called them our colonies. At Waldegg we had a regular cotton plantation, and by degrees we transformed the marsh into a rice-field, which repaid our trouble by a most

prolific yield. We also sought to make some cinnamon plantations, and hoped to obtain from them a good return for our care.

But neither was Prospect Hill neglected. We went there in preference at the time the caper plants were flowering, and brought back a good supply which we put into vinegar. It was about the same time, soon after the rainy season, that the tea plants began to sprout, and we took great care to pluck the leaves, and afterwards to dry and roll them, so that they might not lose their beautiful perfume. Other duties called us, immediately the rainy season commenced, to Sugar-top, for we were obliged to cut the ripe sugar-canes, and to collect the black millet for our cattle, as those two plants were then at maturity. We made use of our boats to bring back the fruits, and when we returned by sea we did not fail to pay a visit to Whale Island.

From Prospect Hill we generally made an excursion to our fort, to see whether elephants or other wild animals had penetrated our plantations, or had been caught in our traps. We also ascended the river to look after our provision of cocoa, bananas, etc., which Fritz had discovered. On each of these occasions we carried home a supply of porcelain clay for domestic use.

Fritz had remarked on his first excursion in this neighbourhood, certain traces of turkeys and had heard their cries, so we resolved to have a regular hunt. With this object we made a grand stand of planks, placed one over the other, which was in the shape of an enormous trap, similar to what boys make of elder twigs to catch small birds; each side was about ten feet long and about six feet high. To attract the birds into this cage, we dug out a subterraneous gallery, which opened into the centre of this square enclosure. The opening to the gallery had been so made that the birds could easily enter. When the chase was about to commence, we strewed the passage with grain and some fruit which the birds liked very well, and fastened up an exterior grating which would prevent their exit. The birds hurried down to feed, and little by little penetrated the mine, and soon arrived inside the trap. As soon as they found they were caught, they became very much alarmed, and beat themselves against the grating and side walls, which we had taken care to mask with branches. We very soon took possession of them and placed them in safety.

Our domestic quadrupeds (for I ought not to omit to mention them) increased and multiplied. The dogs presented us with a number of puppies, many of which we were compelled to drown. I allowed one to be saved, which Jack called Cocoa, a strange name, which he justified by saying that it was short and sonorous, and would sound well in the forest, and echo from the rocks, if the O were properly dwelt upon.

As for the antelopes, we lavished every care upon them, yet they

increased but slowly, for the climate of Whale Island was somewhat too harsh for them. However there were several pairs of them, and we ran the risk of transporting one to Felsenheim, so as to enjoy the sight of their pretty and graceful gambols.

My wife and self as well as my four sons were in excellent health, and retained all our strength, through some slight indispositions and even an occasional touch of fever. The boys were more robust and vigorous than they ever would have been in Europe. Fritz was now twenty-four years old, and though not tall, was very strong and muscular.



Ernest, who was twenty-two, was slighter, but of a colder temperament, more indolent and less strong. He had nevertheless succeeded in overcoming his laziness to a certain extent. In Jack who was twenty, we had a small copy of Fritz, with more delicate limbs and less vigorous appearance, but he was full of agility and skill if he lacked muscular force. Frank who was just seventeen, partook of most of the various qualities of his brothers. He had plenty of sense like Fritz and Ernest, but Jack's playfulness in him was prudence, for being the youngest of the boys, he was frequently obliged to defend himself against their

injustice. Generally all the boys were honest, upright, and with good religious principles, which I had taken care to inculcate and with the more success as they were not disturbed by contact with other men.

Such was the state of our little Robinson Crusoe Colony, after a sojourn of ten years, during the whole of which period we had not beheld the face of a human being except of our own family.

Nevertheless we had not lost all hope of returning to civilized life, and as this hope had brought out our activity in a useful manner, I did not endeavour to extinguish it. We even collected a quantity of merchandise and objects for trade, of which we hoped to make use in that event. With this idea we put by a number of beautiful ostrich feathers. We had also stored a quantity of tea and cochineal, we had filled some sacks with cocoa beans and vanilla, which we had packed, and coated over with resin and wax so that they should not get too dry. We had even collected a small supply of nutmegs, essence of orange, and cinnamon oil, in small porcelain flasks.

All these, and other objects of which I have not made mention, caused us to look forward with confidence to the time of our deliverance, and the worth of the articles together would bring us a good sum of money. Our only regret was the diminution of our powder and nails, and in these matters we were obliged to exercise a rigid economy.

Altogether however we were very well contented with our position. We were very thankful for the advantages we enjoyed, and sought to profit by them according to the wise purposes for which Providence, without doubt, had placed us in our present position.





CHAPTER LII.

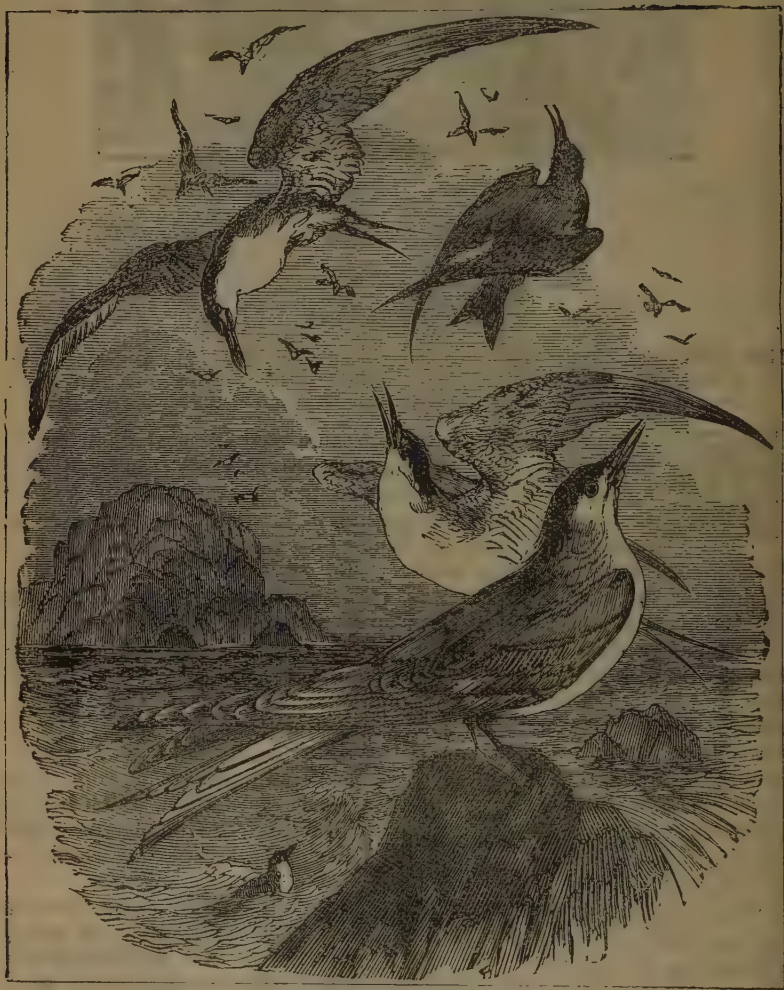
New Discoveries.—Fritz's Excursion.—Sea Swallows.—The Church Rocks.—The Babyoussa.—The Coast Surveyed.—Sea Bears.—The Albatross.—A Letter from the Sea.—Fritz's Narrative.—Pearls.—Our Departure in the Shallop.



Time rolled on my sons became stronger and more enterprising; they ran risks sometimes of which I strongly disapproved. It often occurred that for quite a half day, or perhaps longer, I was entirely ignorant of the whereabouts of the elder boys, for Ernest also grew less apathetic when his thirst for knowledge was excited. But so sure had I prepared a lecture for the young adventurers, they returned with such interesting specimens, that I had not the heart to reproach them.

In this way Fritz went off to Felsenheim for the whole day, and it was not till towards evening that we perceived by the absence of his boat that he had gone by sea. We immediately set out to Shark Island, where, from the flag staff, we could look round for the fugitive. We hoisted the flag and fired a cannon to direct him. At first we could perceive nothing, but after a time we discovered a little black spot upon the water, now glittering in the last rays of the setting sun, which by the aid of the telescope we made out to be our pseudo Greenlander. He was rowing quietly, and approaching, although more slowly than we expected, in the direction of Felsenheim.

"Number one, fire," said Ernest, in a tone of command. We cheered lustily, and descended the bank at a run, so that we might meet Fritz, if possible, in our own boat, and receive him at the shore near our home. He had scarcely entered Safety Bay, when we perceived what retarded him,—his boat was hung all round with its floating booty, and a large bundle, which looked like feathers, was hung upon the morse's head at the bow of the skiff. A great bag was also fastened to the other end of the boat, and dragged in the water. All these things retarded his progress very much. "Welcome, Fritz," I cried; "whence



SEA SWALLOWS.

do you come? where have you been roaming? You have brought home a capital booty. Are those lapwing nests you have in the bow, there? But whatever your booty, your safe return is the chief thing. Thank Heaven you are safe."

"Yes, thank Heaven," replied Fritz, "I am quite well, and I have brought home a good cargo, and have made some discoveries, which no doubt will lead very soon to new excursions."

When his boat was beached, and Fritz had detached the various bundles, his brothers seized the little skiff and dragged it, with the owner still in it, almost up to our house. Then they went to seek with a barrow, a marine animal as large as a turtle, and a bag filled with rounded shells, which had been left upon the beach. Having brought up these treasures, we all surrounded Fritz to hear a recital of his adventures.

"In the first place," he began, "I hope you will not find fault with me, father, for going away without your express permission. Now that I have such a splendid boat, I make up my mind to start off at the spur of the moment whenever the idea seizes me. We have no knowledge of the country towards the west, as we have never penetrated farther than where I killed that morse. This idea occurred to me a long time ago, but the determination to go there was very sudden, and I did not ask your consent, because I was doubtful of obtaining it, and I did not wish to argue against your refusal. So I packed quietly away in my boat some provisions, with a bottle of fresh water and one of hydromel, put my compass on board, with my harpoon, boat hook, and a fishing-line, and on my left-hand side a gun, which I had covered with a piece of platinum to protect it from the wet. I had a pair of pistols in my girdle, and a game bag at my side. I always keep my eagle near me; and thus equipped, I waited the opportunity to embark unperceived.

"Yesterday morning was so fine and the sea so calm, that I was impelled to start, and I seized the moment when you were all occupied in the grotto. I took with me a stout hatchet, jumped into my boat, and was carried away with the current of the river very quickly out to sea. I took care to note the direction in which I went, so that I might the more easily return.

"I saw, as I passed over the place where our vessel had been wrecked, and not very deep down either, a number of cannon and shot, and iron bars; perhaps some day we shall devise means to recover them. From there I directed my course diagonally towards the west, across the end of a promontory where the rocks were heaped up upon the ground, and stood up in all directions from the water, while some were scarcely covered. A crowd of sea birds were roosting on the most inaccessible cliffs, while others flew about uttering the most piercing cries. In the more accessible places, and where there was any flat surface, there were immense marine animals, basking in the sun, and roaring in the most deafening manner. They were grouped in their various species—there were sea lions, sea elephants, sea bears, and all kinds of seals, particularly morses, which I saw raise their immense bodies out of the

water, and lie upon the rocks. These animals seem to have taken up their quarters in this district, for in many places on the bank I saw collections of bones and teeth, so we can get skulls already blanched for our museum whenever we like."

"Oh, that is capital, capital," cried all the other boys; and Frank asked me what was the use of the morses' curved tusks, as they could be no use in masticating the food.

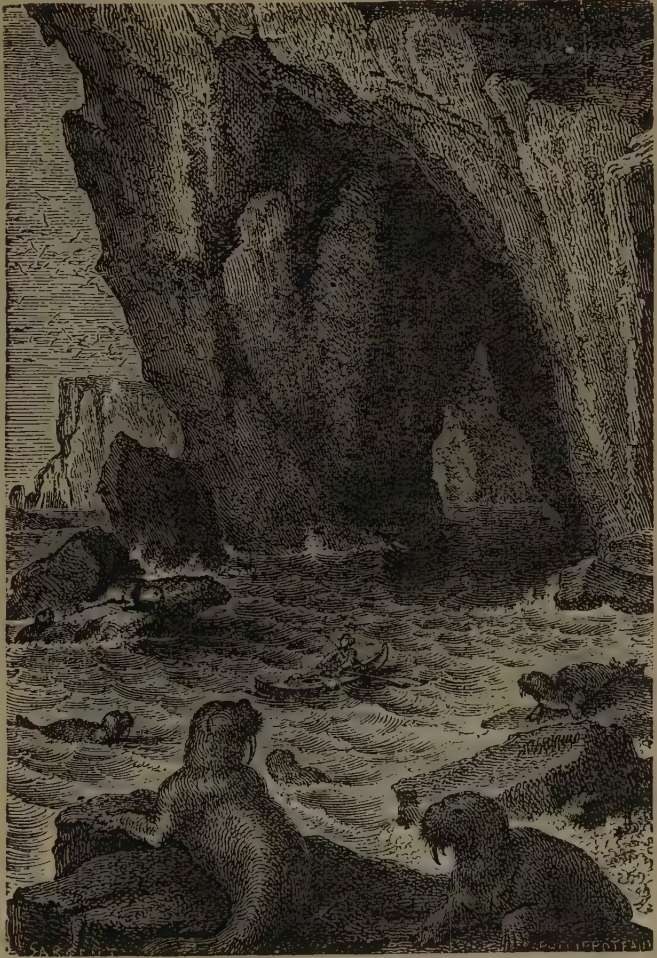
"All teeth are not made for eating," I replied; "some for attack, some for defence, as with the elephants' tusks, others still are used to tear down branches of trees, like the teeth of the babyroussa. There are also some teeth intended to detach shells from the rocks, or to assist in raising the heavy body of the owner, which Fritz remarked in the case of the morse. Look at the hippopotamus, he has such a variety of teeth, and no one knows for what purpose, as he is a frugivorous animal, besides, the teeth of the hippopotamus and the morse are less porous and more valuable than those of the elephant, for the former do not get yellow by age, so the dentists seek for them to use for artificial teeth."

Fritz then continued his narrative.

"I must confess," he said, "that I did not feel quite at my ease amongst these gigantic animals. I endeavoured to pass unperceived amongst the reefs which they inhabited, and I did not attempt to fight my way through; but it was not till the expiration of quite an hour and a half that I found myself in safety, before a splendid rocky portico, which nature had constructed in the severest Gothic style. It opened like the arch of an immense bridge, while on the other side the rock rose right out of the sea perpendicularly.

"There, in this sombre vault, were an innumerable quantity of sea swallows. A whole flock of these birds rose at my approach, uttering shrill cries, and wheeled round my head as if they meditated an attack upon me. Their daring, however, did not affect my courage, which was sustained by curiosity. The birds were not much bigger than wrens, they had white breasts, wings of an ashen grey, but the back and tail appeared to me to be very black. I saw their nests hanging by thousands to the rocks; they were beautifully made of feathers, down, and pieces of grass; but their peculiarity is that each of them rested upon a kind of support, like a long spoon without a handle, which was fixed to the rock, and which at first sight appeared to me to be made of grey wax, and excited my curiosity. I detached some empty nests, and I discovered, after a careful examination, that they were made of a substance like isinglass. I have brought back some of them as they may be of use.

"After having placed these nests in the boat, and packed them carefully, I continued my voyage under this beautiful vault, and at length found myself in a lonely bay, the shores of which were rather low, and bordered



by an almost illimitable savannah interspersed with clumps of trees, and bounded on the right by enormous masses of rock, on the left by a pretty stream, which watered it. At the other side of this river I could perceive a great marsh, and a thick forest of cedars shut in the view.

"While I coasted along on the mirror-like water, I remarked at different depths a great number of shells, something like oysters. I could even perceive, owing to the transparency of the water, how they were fastened to each other on to the reefs. These, I thought, ought to serve as a good article of food, and quite as good as the small oysters of Safety Bay, for two men would be quite satisfied with one of the great bivalves. It was first necessary to taste them, to see if they were worth carrying home, so I knocked off a few with my boat hook, drew them in with my net, and threw them on shore without leaving the canoe. I immediately afterwards obtained a good supply, which I destined for Felsenheim, and



THE BABYROUSSA.

having wrapped them up in my bag, I let them drag in the water behind the canoe.

"But when I came back to the place where I had left the first few oysters, I found that the heat of the sun had caused the shells to open, and they were turning bad, so my appetite quickly disappeared, but I was nevertheless anxious to examine them. I was particularly interested with the very fine filaments, by means of which they attached themselves to the rocks, and which appeared to me would be very useful in the manufacture of our hats. I therefore cut off these tufts and put them in my game bag for future examination.

"Afterwards I cut off some pieces of the flesh, but found it so coarse that I despaired of using it for food, even when cooked. But when

cutting them my knife encountered some hard substance, which appeared to me something like mother-of-pearl, and soon I dug out some really nice pearls from the oysters. I found these pretty little buttons between the flesh and the exterior shell, and one pearl I have got is as big as a moderate-sized nut. I collected them all in my bamboo box."

"Let us see them, Fritz," cried his brothers; "how beautiful they are, and how they shine; what a treasure you have found."



SEA BEAR.

"Yes, indeed," I replied, "yours is a valuable discovery, my dear boy, and if our possessions were known we should have plenty of people here to collect them. These are nothing more nor less than magnificent oriental pearls, but they are less useful to us, in fact, than the edible birds' nests you have brought, since we have no means of disposing of the

jewels. Nevertheless, we will shortly visit the place where you have found these shells, for the discovery may be of very great value. But pray continue your narrative."

"After a short rest," said Fritz, "I continued my voyage at hazard along the coast, which was broken up into a number of little creeks. The bag of oysters behind the boat impeded my progress a good deal. I passed across the mouth of the river I have mentioned, the fall of which is very slight, and, covered with the most beautiful aquatic plants, it looked almost like a meadow; the illusion being increased by the fact that a quantity of birds were walking on the plants as if on dry land. I remember having read something like this, relative to the St. John River in Florida, and I named this stream the St. John also. After having taken in a new supply of fresh water, I finished my inspection of the great bay, to which I gave the name of Bay of Pearls. I soon reached the promontory on the other side, which I found similar to the opposite one; the sides were distant about two leagues in a straight line, and both stretched out a long way to sea, but they were united by a long reef of rocks, which entirely separated the bay from the open sea, with the exception of one opening, but I did not see any arched rock as in the other promontory.

"On the other hand I perceived a great number of quadrupeds about the size of an ordinary seal. They were playing on the reefs, sometimes in the water, flapping about, pursuing each other, diving and reappearing, but always in the most amicable manner. Being very anxious to make myself acquainted with them, I wished to kill one to bring home, but I was too far off then, and I was afraid that I should not be able to approach unperceived, or if so, that I might only wound my prey, which would then escape me by diving. So I fastened my boat behind a rock, took my eagle on my wrist, and started him off in pursuit of one group of animals. The eagle dashed at one of the largest and most beautiful of all, and very soon blinded him. I jumped from behind the rock upon another, and with a few blows of my boathook I soon stunned the animal. I lost all traces of the others—they disappeared as if by enchantment."

All the other boys suddenly approached the narrator as if they expected to find the seal in his waistcoat pocket, and exclaimed, "Oh Fritz, what is it? Is it not a seal? Have you brought it with you?"

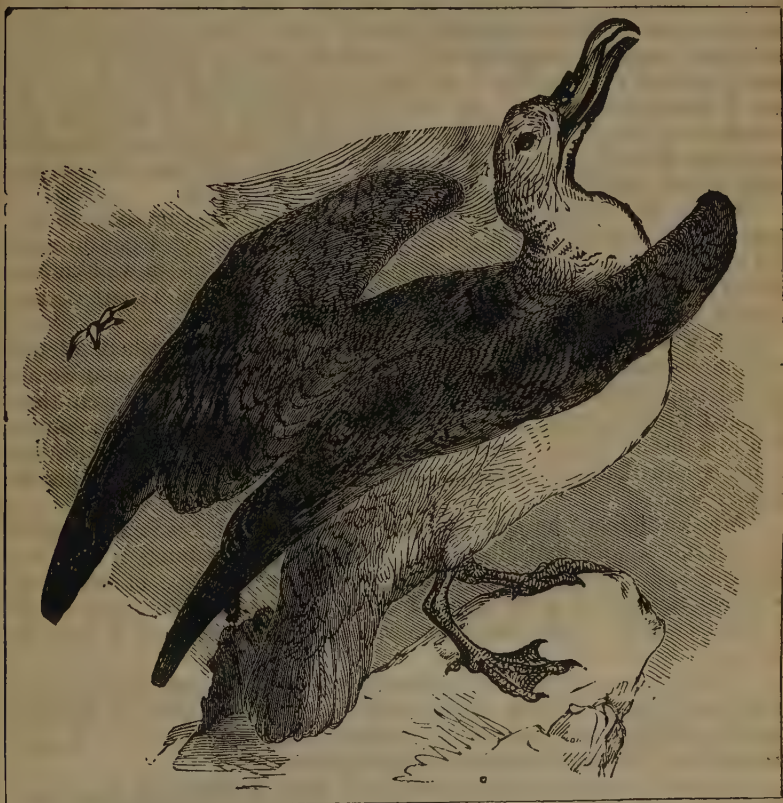
"Certainly," replied Fritz; "do you not see that misshapen mass? I made it swim behind my boat, and it acquitted itself very well."

"Ah!" said Ernest, "I expect you have filled the skin with air, as the Greenlanders do to make their captives float."

"But what is this creature?" asked Jack "it looks to me like a very fully packed portmanteau with two pairs of ducks' feet."

"I think," replied Ernest, "that it is a sea otter, for it looks like the pictures I have seen."

"If that is the fact," I said, "it possesses a beautiful and very costly fur, and we shall be able to make a very valuable exchange, for the Chinese mandarins pay very highly for such fur as this."



THE WANDERING ALBATROSS.

"The fact is," said my wife, "that men attach much more value to superfluities, than to the useful objects of life."

"But tell me, Fritz," I asked, "how have you managed to bring back your prey so easily? It must have been very heavy for your boat."

"It cost me a good deal of trouble and thought," replied Fritz, "but

I was determined not to leave it behind. The Greenlanders' plan came into my mind at last, but I did not care to apply my mouth to an opening cut in the animal's flesh, and I had nothing like a tube, for there were no reeds growing in the neighbourhood of those bare rocks.

"So while I was thinking what I should do, and looking vaguely round, I was all at once struck with the immense quantity of birds that were flying around me. Albatrosses, sea swallows, frigate birds, and a lot of others, wheeled close by my head, and so near did they approach, that at length I struck amongst them at random with my boat hook. I hit one great bird so fairly that it fell with extended wings at my feet. It was a beautiful albatross, and while it lay before me it suddenly occurred to me that some of its quills would serve my purpose, so I pulled out some of the biggest to use as a tube to blow out the skin of the otter, which was then very soon ready to be towed home.

"It was now time to think of returning. I paddled my boat to the farther side of the reef, then I arranged in it all my booty. I got through the rocks without accident, and very soon found myself in well-known waters. Before long I perceived our flag, and heard the report of the cannon which gave me a signal of welcome home."

Such was Fritz's narrative, and as soon as he had finished, all the boys threw themselves upon the objects he had collected, and we all passed some time in contemplating them. While the others were thus engaged, Fritz made me a sign to follow him; I accordingly accompanied him to a distant spot, where he completed his recital by communicating to me a remarkable circumstance, which he had the good sense not to make public.

"My dear father," he said, "a most curious thing has come to light in connection with that albatross,—while I was examining it as it lay upon my knees, to my great surprise I perceived a piece of linen rag was tied round one of its legs. I hastened to take it off, and look at it more closely. I saw that there was writing upon it, and I read as follows in English:—

"Whoever you are to whom God sends this message, come to the rescue of an unfortunate English woman, who is cast away upon the volcanic island, which you will recognise by the fire escaping from one of its craters. Rescue the unfortunate one on the smoking rock."

As I read these words over and over again I felt as if electrified. Good Heaven, I thought, is it possible? Can a woman be living alone in these desert places, and how can she have come there? And yet why not? Perhaps she may have been cast away as we were by the storm. If I could only find her and save her, or even bring her some consolation for the present.

With this idea I attempted to reanimate the poor bird. I dipped a

feather in the seal's blood, and then wrote upon the linen these words in English :—

"Have faith in God; assistance is not far off."

I then knotted the two pieces of rag to the bird's legs, so that the lady if she saw the bird again, would perceive in a moment that it had fallen into the hands of human beings; for I was sure that the shipwrecked woman had tamed it, and that it would return sooner or later to the flaming rock, which no doubt was not very far distant.

I succeeded in restoring the bird to consciousness by making him swallow a little hydromel, and before long he took his departure and flew away in a westerly direction. He disappeared so quickly that I was obliged to give up all hope of following in my boat.

"So you see I am extremely agitated and restless, father. Do you think my note will reach its address? Will the unfortunate woman find it, and can we save her?"

"My dear boy," I replied, "your adventure is without question the most remarkable that could have happened to us just now, and I congratulate you upon the prudence which you have displayed; above all that you have confided in me alone, for it would not do to talk of it to your mother and brothers, they would only be agitated, which would do no good. But you must be calm; the rag is perhaps of an ancient date, and she who has written on it may have perished, or perhaps she may be somewhat inaccessible to us; let us return for the present to the others, when I hope we may arrange something."

As I spoke we returned arm in arm to the family circle. They suspected that something unusual was on foot, and they listened to what I had to say in solemn silence. I raised my voice and gravely said,—

"My dear wife, I present to you your son, and you, my boys, your eldest brother, with the recommendation that for some time, and above all in the last excursion of which he has told us, he has conducted himself with so much courage and prudence, that from this time forward I shall treat him as an independent young man, and I desire that you will endorse my wishes. For the future he will be my friend, so to speak, and will no longer receive directions from me, but only suggestions. He will act for the future according as he thinks best, and I hereby release him from my paternal authority."

Fritz was quite upset by this unexpected scene; his mother clasped him in her arms, and shedding tears of joy, gave him her blessing. She then started off ostensibly to prepare a feast, but really, I believe, to recover her composure.

My other sons were somewhat surprised also, but although they did not display the least dismay, treated it quite as a matter of business, and regarded it in the comic vein.

"I congratulate you with all my heart," said Ernest; "you will now assume the *toga virilis*; but I hope that you will not walk any longer with those manly feet in such youthful shoes."

"I hope you will sometimes cover me with your *toga virilis* when you see my youthful folly break out," said Jack.

"And I hope," said Frank, "that you will sometimes lead me by the hand, so that I may taste the sweets of independence, for I must obey the longest and oftenest in this island."

After this little episode they again occupied themselves with the pearls, and each one found some remarks and questions to make upon the subject.

"How can you open these things," said Frank? "I should like to see how these pearls are in their natural state. I have tried to open the shells with my knife and cannot succeed."

"You must try fire, or the blow of a hammer," said Jack; "there is a way to do everything in the world."



As his brother was speaking, the boy ran off to the kitchen and quickly brought them back, having opened them.

"Yes," he said, "the fire is sufficient; but, papa, where are the pearls? I only see a shapeless mass of flesh and viscous matter. I cannot find the least trace of pearls."

"I can quite understand it, you stupid boy," I replied. "In the first place, it is not every shell that contains a pearl; and if it does, the pearl is either in the shell or in the animal's flesh, and requires some trouble to find. You might as well have cooked the oyster in its shell at once."

"But they do not heat them in the pearl fisheries, if I recollect rightly," said Ernest.

"No, certainly not," I replied; "that would take too long, and would be too troublesome. They leave the shells exposed to the sun until the oysters are rotten, and then the superintendents come and have them searched."

Jack came back this time carrying two cooked oysters, which were easily drawn from the shells, and we found several pearls more or less large in the interior.

"This is charming; it is perfect," they cried. "The little man has made a good selection from Fritz's bag."

"But are these pearls of a good water," asked Ernest. "What does papa think?"

"I think they are very good," I said, "and it is possible they may be of a first-rate quality. See how clear they are, and how they glitter; they look as if they were silvered, and yet how transparent. They also are of the most valuable shape, for they are round."

"How are pearls formed?" asked Fritz; "is it known?"

I replied, "There are many explanations given. It is said that naturalists have discovered that it is chiefly in bruised shells that pearls are found, and also in those which have been bored through by a little insect called *polype-vrille-phocas*, for this animal tries to penetrate into the oyster, so that it may feed upon it. The latter, to defend himself, covers the whole over with a hard substance, which soon becomes as hard as the shell itself, and partakes of the same brilliancy and variety of colour. Another reason given is that the pearl oyster covers with the same substance grains of sand or gravel which have accidentally entered the shell, so he is thus less inconvenienced by the angular irritation. There are also fishers who increase the number of pearls by introducing foreign substances between the oyster shells."

The boys then all requested that we should start off without delay to fish for the pearls, though they were quite ignorant of the art of diving.

"Gently, gently," I said; "let us get ready our horses before we attempt to ride. If you wish your enterprise to succeed you must think about the necessary appliances. If each one of you will provide something useful for the expedition I will consent to its being undertaken."

We immediately set to work. I began to forge two large and two small rakes, which I fitted with solid wooden handles and with rings attached, so that I might be able to fasten them to the boat by means of cords, and drag them along the bottom of the sea where we supposed the oysters lay.

Ernest made, according to my instructions, an instrument something like a scraper with a chisel, which would serve to detach from the rocks the edible birds' nests, of which we wished to get a supply.

Jack occupied himself by constructing a light bamboo ladder, and this turned out very useful.

Frank assisted his mother in making little nets, which were fixed upon the large rakes, and into which the oysters fell as soon as they were detached.

Fritz meantime was working very hard fixing a seat for another rower in his boat, which showed me that he still cherished hopes of releasing the lady from the rock.



CHAPTER LIII.

Edible Birds' Nests.—Skeletons of Whales.—The Gigantic Rocks.—Incidents of the Voyage.—Pearl Fishing.—Jack's Adventure.—A Wild Boar.—Truffles.



E set out on our expedition one day when the weather and tide were favourable, carrying with us the good wishes of my wife and Frank, and with high hopes of success. Our companions were Knips, junior,—a monkey which we had tamed, after the decease of his namesake ; the jackal also was taken, and our two brave dogs, which were ready for anything, even for elephants and lions.

Jack particularly wished to act as pilot in this expedition, and to occupy the newly-constructed seat in the bow of the canoe, and to direct our course amongst the rocks and shoals. Under the guidance of the two brothers we threaded the devious route in safety past Whale Island, where the surf boiled amongst the reefs like a whirlpool. Our young pilots led the way with skill and courage, and I followed them prudently in the larger boat, in which I proceeded under reefed sails until we reached more open water.

As we passed the rocks we beheld many skeletons and teeth and blanched skulls of whales ; the youthful crews of our boats regarded these remains with much curiosity ; but I did not wish to lose valuable time, and promised to return at a fitting opportunity to collect some of those remains for use, as well as for ornament in our museum of natural history.

We quickly reached a promontory, which, in consequence of its peculiar formation, we named Flat Nose Cape. On the other side of it we perceived the headland beyond, which, according to Fritz, was the Bay of Pearls. We had not a very great distance to traverse, however, for we could see the great rocky portal which Fritz had discovered, and through which he made a short cut. The promontory, as we approached, appeared quite like a Gothic cathedral, and which we

accordingly named Church Rock. Fritz called the exterior reefs, upon which he had killed the otter, the Otter's Creek; the bay between Flat Nose Cape and the Otter's Creek, was designated Tonquin Bay, after the Chinese edible birds' nests, which we had come to seek.

The nearer we approached the rocks the more we were impressed with their magnificent appearance. They seemed rather the handiwork of Titans, than of Gothic architects, and formed of the boulders from the mountains.



Innumerable flocks of the small swallows flew about right and left in parties, and then uniting returned to their nests in the rocks. A number of these nests were placed in the gloomy fissures of the cliffs, on the face of the rocks, and in crevices of the reefs.

When we had arrived close to the gigantic portals of rock, we took our weapons to detach the nests, and in this we derived much assistance from Ernest's ladder, which we reared up against the cliffs, and on which we could so easily ascend, though it was fashioned more like a bear's climbing pole than the usual step in general use.

We directed our attention chiefly to the deserted nests, so that we

should not destroy any eggs or nests unnecessarily. Fritz and Jack were the most active of the party, and quickly filled their nets on high. Ernest and I on the contrary detached those lower down, and received the spoil as it came down, cleaned the nests as well as the circumstances and time permitted, and placed them in a large bag.

This was soon filled, and as I was rather anxious about Fritz and Ernest balancing themselves upon such a precarious ladder, and as they appeared somewhat tired, I called to them to desist from further effort, and to prepare for the passage of the immense vault.

It was not without some emotion that we entered, for the obscurity was very great. The noise which the swallows made flying about was repeated by a thousand echoes, and from the other side was heard the mysterious murmurings of the waves, as they beat against the rocks. But Fritz reassured me by stating that the canal was navigable throughout, and we fortified our courage with a little food, of which the ape and the dogs also partook; the first-named had a good meal, for we were feasting upon nuts and almonds, but the dogs were obliged to content themselves with a slighter repast, and we fed them upon maize-flour and pemmican, made into little cakes. In this I followed the Arabian custom of preparing for travels in the desert certain little balls of pounded date-stones, with which they feed their camels from time to time.

Jack took the liberty to suggest that his jackal should be favoured with a cake.

"He is such a first-rate fellow," he said, "that all the pemmican in America would not be too much for him, and he deserves his bread quite as well as the others."

"Yes," replied Fritz, "and more particularly his meat, for if you once begin to feed him on pemmican, there will be none left for the rest of us."

"But," interrupted Ernest, "is it not ridiculous for us to trouble ourselves to gather all these nests, when there is no chance of any vessel coming to purchase them from us?"

"Hope, my dear boy," I replied, "is one of the greatest blessings vouchsafed to humanity. She is the daughter of Courage, and the sister of Activity, for a courageous man never despairs. It is that which prevents him from giving himself up to an aimless activity, which only consumes itself, and tends to laziness eventually. The philosophy of idleness only tells us that the success of our actions is uncertain, and that men's hopes are delusive. But let us stop in our course of rapine, so that you need not reproach us some day, my little philosopher, with behaving like vultures, which carry away everything they take a fancy to, whether it is useful or not."

I then gave the word to depart, for the tide was rising, and I wished

to take advantage of it, so that I might the more easily and rapidly traverse the vault. And in fact the tide carried us along so quickly, that we were enabled to dispense with the rowing, and had more leisure to admire the magnificence and splendid proportions of the vault. On all sides we could perceive yawning grottos and caverns which were swallowed up in profound darkness, and were probably of immense extent. The upper part was formed like an immense Gothic



roof, and we were astonished at its regular proportions. It almost seemed as if the Universal Architect had commenced to build an immense temple, and had abandoned his design. But instead of human worshippers it was inhabited by birds and marine animals, for on all sides we discovered traces of morses, seals, and sea birds.

When we had traversed the rocky passage we found ourselves in one of the most beautiful bays that can be imagined. It appeared to me to

be seven or eight leagues in circumference, and was ornamented with some small romantic-looking islands, and sheltered on the seaward side by a reef of rocks, in which a passage of some yards width opened, which was large enough to admit of the entrance of vessels of great size. Along the coast-line one could perceive at intervals a series of creeks more or less large, the mouths of pretty little rivers, which promised a safe and pleasant anchoring ground. A little farther on, about half way round the circumference of the bay, was a river of considerable size, which we subsequently named the St. John River, because, like the stream of that name in Florida, it is very full of fish, and also frequented by a number of caymans, or American crocodiles.

The only drawback to this bay was that it contained some sand-banks and shoals, but the latter were rather advantageous for us to anchor upon, and contained immense oyster beds. The sand-banks were plainly visible, so we could avoid them easily. We rowed along this beautiful basin with the greatest delight, and skirted the shore, when we were thoroughly impressed by the beauties of the rolling prairies and thick forests, so well watered by beautifully clear and softly murmuring streams. One creek of good size, close to the oyster bed from which Fritz had taken his shells, was selected as the termination of our excursion, more particularly as the little stream which ran into the sea at that place promised us certain refreshment.

Our faithful guardians were delighted to see the fresh water, for we had served it out to them very sparingly during the day, and they jumped overboard in order to enjoy it the sooner. Master Knips, who also felt the influence of the stream, indulged in the most comical grimaces, and ran hither and thither in the boat, thrusting his nose over the bows, and making as if he would jump into the sea; then returning ostentatiously, and crouching down each time in a disappointed way. These antics at first excited our laughter, and then our compassion; and at length I threw overboard a log of wood to which I had fastened a cord, and Knips took advantage of this frail bridge to get ashore, and enjoy the sweet fresh water.

We followed close behind the little rope-dancer, and directed our course towards the same spot. Afterwards, as it was getting late, we made up our minds to prepare supper, which consisted of pemmican soup, potatoes baked in the ashes, and maize biscuits. For firing we used the driftwood we found on the shore, which had been well dried in the sun. My sons also collected a sufficient quantity to keep the fire up during the night. We soon made preparations for sleeping. The dogs laid down upon the shore near the fire in a very comfortable manner. As for ourselves we returned to the boat, and cast anchor at some little distance from the shore, so that at the first alarm from our

four-footed guardians, we should be able to seize our weapons. I thought that wild beasts would not be likely to attack us away from the land; nevertheless, as a matter of precaution, we tied up Knips to the mast in full confidence of his well-known vigilance. We established ourselves on the poop of the vessel under a canvas awning which we had put up; this shelter, in conjunction with our hyæna skins and bears' skins, would protect us from the dews and chills of night. We slept peacefully after we had overcome the nervous feeling to which the howling of a troop of jackals had given rise, and in which our own jackal joined furiously.

We were astir at break of day, and having disembarked and breakfasted, we rowed to the oyster bed, where in a short time we succeeded, thanks to our nets and other utensils, in collecting a number of the shell-fish. This first success encouraged us to continue the work during the whole of that and the two following days, and by degrees we collected an immense pile of oysters, which we stacked along the shore. While we were thus employed we perceived on the bank a large quantity of the saline herb used in the manufacture of soda. I collected a great quantity of it and spread it to dry on the oyster heap, for I proposed to endeavour to extract the alkali, which would be very useful in the manufacture of soap, sugar, etc.

Towards evening, about an hour before supper time, we made each day an excursion along the shore, and generally succeeded in bagging some game, such as partridges, woodcocks, etc. On the last evening of our pearl fishing we experienced a great desire to penetrate into the neighbouring wood, in which we fancied we had heard the cries of guinea fowls and peacocks. Ernest went ahead with one of the dogs and Jack followed through the grass with his jackal, while Fritz and I were still engaged on the beach. Shortly we heard the report of a gun, which was followed by a loud cry, and then by a second shot. The dogs galloped off at once in the direction of the sound. Master Knips tumbled heavily from Bill's back as he started, for the monkey usually rode on the dog's back. He was somewhat stunned by the fall, and did not get up for a few moments. Then he followed us all, sometimes on two legs, sometimes on three or four, limping and crying as he proceeded.

"The case is urgent," cried Fritz, and he ran quickly in the same direction after having let loose his eagle. As he ran Fritz drew a pistol, and after some little time I heard it fired, and then a cry of victory. It may be imagined that I lost no time in arriving on the field of battle, and I perceived Jack between the trees supported by Fritz and Ernest. He appeared quite knocked up, but he talked glibly enough.

"Thank goodness," I said "he is all right, and the accident is not so bad as I feared."

I told the boys to fetch a cordial, which they would find under our hastily constructed table on the sea-shore. When they returned, Jack began to groan and to rub himself all over, saying, "I am wounded here, and here," indicating at least twenty places.

After having made him open his dress I examined him all over, but although I pressed him in all directions I could not find any bones broken or even contused, and his breathing was quite free, nor could I find any traces of blood. In fact the whole of the injuries resolved themselves into a vague muscular pain, and I could not help saying,—

"Is it the correct thing for a young hero to utter such terrible cries all for nothing? A brave hunter ought not to call attention to a few bruises."

"It is very well to talk of a few bruises," said Jack. "I have been nearly killed by that horrible beast. If I had not been pretty tough you would have seen the last of your brave hunter. Indeed if it had not been for Fritz's shot, and the assistance of those brave dogs, I should not have escaped."

"Well, but at any rate you might tell us what this monster is."

"Mind, Fritz, you do not forget his head and ears. Oh, oh, my legs, my knees—you must cut them off—oh, my ribs—we can have our supper and dinner off his carcase—there will be plenty—"

"What *are* you crying about, Jack? Do you want us to cut off your legs, and make our suppers off your ribs?"

"No, no; but the head of the animal and his claws would look very well in our museum. He gave me a nice fright I can assure you. But I can laugh at it now. Those who laugh last, laugh longest."

"Laugh away, my lad," said Ernest; "you did not laugh much when the animal had you down; you were crying loudly enough then, and looked very small."

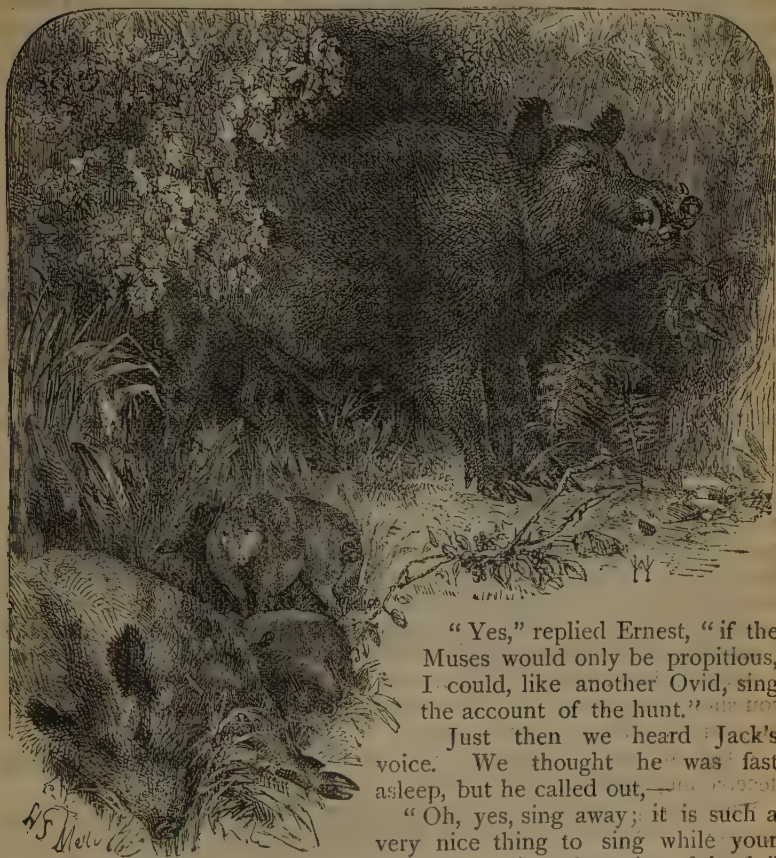
"I wish you would tell me what you were talking about," I said. "You are making such a 'muddle' of it all that I do not know in the least what it is we are to have for supper, or what we are to place in our museum."

"It is an enormous African wild boar," replied Ernest. "He certainly was a formidable animal to look at, with his long tusks and tremendous snout, with which he turned up the soil like a plough."

"I am extremely thankful," I replied, "that you escaped such a great danger. Let us now think how best we can restore the wounded man, for he requires attention. The shock he has experienced may do him harm if we do not counteract its influence."

So I made Jack swallow a glass of canary, rubbed his limbs with the same liquid, and then made him lie down in the boat, where he slept peacefully

"Now," said I to Ernest, when we had returned to shore, "tell me how all this occurred. I have no doubt but that you played a principal part in the adventure, and like Xenophon and Cæsar you may be at the same time hero and historian."



"Yes," replied Ernest, "if the Muses would only be propitious, I could, like another Ovid, sing the account of the hunt."

Just then we heard Jack's voice. We thought he was fast asleep, but he called out,—

"Oh, yes, sing away; it is such a very nice thing to sing while your poor brother is at the point of death."

We both burst out laughing at this observation of the "dying" man, who wished us really to believe that he was three parts dead. Our laughter made him keep quiet, for we did not again hear his voice. Ernest then gave me the following account:—

"I entered in advance of all into the little wood with one dog, when suddenly he quitted me, barking furiously. He pursued a wild boar which was crossing the copse, grunting and growling, and which did not arrest his course until he reached the edge of the wood, where he began to sharpen his tusks against the trunk of a tree. Just then Jack arrived, and immediately the jackal perceived the boar he flew at him, and with the dog jumped round and round him, seeking an unguarded place to attack. I approached cautiously, passing unperceived from tree to tree in order to get a good aim. The jackal, which had very stupidly approached too near the wild boar, received a thrust which sent him howling away. His master was so enraged at this that he stepped into the open and fired at the boar, but missing, only made him more furious. The animal, all the time worried by the jackal and dog, started off in pursuit of Jack, who fled panic stricken. I also fired at the boar, but did not succeed in killing him, and the monster redoubled his speed in excessive rage. Jack ran like a Hottentot, and would probably have escaped if he had not tripped over the root of a tree. His terrible adversary soon closed with him, but fortunately was attacked from behind by the other two dogs, and obliged to defend himself against them. He was therefore unable to do Jack any injury, and Fritz's eagle descending at the same moment, like the good genius in a fairy tale, pounced down upon the raging boar with such vigour as quite to occupy his attention, while Fritz, coming up at the same time, shot the beast with a pistol. The boar fell flat upon Jack, who was still lying upon the ground. Fritz's pistol shot was the third report you heard, but I had reloaded and was preparing to shoot him myself from behind a tree if I could get an opportunity. Jack got up groaning loudly; Fritz offered him his arm, and as I looked round upon the ground which had been torn up by the wild boar, I was astonished to perceive master Knips regaling himself on the food the animal had left. I went up to him and I saw that he had been partaking freely of a root something like a potato. I collected half a dozen of them, and put them in my game bag, so that you should see them; here they are, and if one may judge by the smell they ought to be very good to eat."

"Let me see," I replied. "If my nose and intelligence do not deceive me, these are truffles of the very best kind."

"Ah, papa," said Ernest, "are you eating these roots raw like master Knips? I should have thought they would be better cooked."

"That is a matter of taste," I replied; "but they have such a flavour of garlic that it would be as well to have them properly prepared."

Fritz followed my example, and was glad to find that though resembling the potato in appearance, the flavour was quite different, but he could find neither seed nor shoot.

"I believe," he said, "they are the same little round hard balls which taste so disagreeably in sauces and stews at home, but these have a much more delicate and pleasant flavour."

"You must know," I added, "that the truffles you eat in Europe have been cut into slices and dried; these on the contrary are fresh from the ground. This slicing and drying process deprives them in a great measure of their perfume, and takes away all disagreeable taste. Epicures prefer them fresh, either cooked with red wine, or cured in oil with sardines."

"Where are they generally found?" asked Fritz. "Do they bring



them from all parts of the world? Can they not be planted and sown at will?"

"They are frequently met with in Italy, France, and even in Germany, in oak forests, or even beneath isolated beech-trees and oak-trees. People go in search of truffles with a dog or often with a pig. In Italy, and even in other countries, they employ a small species of dog which has a very fine sense of smell. These dogs can detect truffles under ground, and scratch them up without eating them. A portion is then given to the dog as a reward, while the rest is collected. But if you

have not a dog trained for the purpose, a pig will do very well after you have put a ring in his nose, for fear he will eat too many truffles."

"But how can they find out where the truffles are, as they put forth neither stem nor leaves?"

"It is by the smell, of which these animals are very fond. The mode of propagation of truffles is, I believe, unknown. It is said, nevertheless, that in proper sandy soil they can be propagated like potatoes. They are found sometimes the size of a pea, and so on as big as an apple, so that proves that they do grow."

"All that is very mysterious," said Ernest. "I am surprised to think that man, having discovered so many secrets of nature, has not yet been able to detect the presence of truffles underground."

"I recollect having heard of one method," I replied. "There are certain little flies which hover about the truffles, they deposit their eggs on the truffles, and the worms which come out of them eat them. At certain times you will see swarms of these little flies hovering over the spot, and thus you will know that truffles are beneath; but I do not know what species of insect they are."

"Is there only one sort of truffles?" said Ernest, "and are they classed amongst the vegetables, although they have neither roots, stems, nor seeds?"

"You are puzzling me with your questions, my boy. They are classed with mushrooms, though they differ in many respects; but I do not know their species, and I believe there is only one, which, however, may possess varieties of size and colour, particularly in the interior, according to their age and the nature of the soil they grow in. Their exterior rind is generally black or brown; the interior varies between white, pale rose colour, yellow, and brown, even black sometimes when decaying. I can almost affirm that the smallest species differ from the rest, for they appear to me to be different in their form, as well as to possess a more perfumed taste than the rest, which are rounder and rougher on the surface."

While we were thus conversing we had eaten all Ernest's gifts, and the approach of night warned us to think of repose. We should have been very glad to have had our dogs near us on the shore, but they were keeping guard over the carcass of the boar, and it was too late to recall them. So without any further ceremony we lighted our fire, ate a morsel of supper, and retired to rest in our boat, where we passed the night as tranquilly as at Felsenheim.





CHAPTER LIV.

Use of the Boar.—Cooking the Flesh.—A terrible Concert.—The Lion.—A splendid Victory.—The Lioness arrives.—The Dog's Death and Burial.—Bill's Epitaph.—No News of Fritz.—A Curious Arrival.—The Cachalot.



VERY early next morning we returned to the scene of the late combat to determine upon what we should do with the boar. We left Jack behind us, however, for he was in need of repose, and did not care to move.

Immediately we had reached the wood one of the dogs came bounding towards us, so we were assured that they had passed the night in safety. We soon reached the battle-field, and I was astonished to see the size of the boar. It seemed to me that this terrible animal was fit to cope with a lion or a buffalo.

While I was steadily gazing at the fallen animal, Fritz exclaimed, "Well, we have now an excellent opportunity to replenish our stock of Westphalia hams. We could not have got any larger than these anywhere."

We only found a few truffles remaining. But Fritz hastened to look out for the swarms of flies, and discovered them in one or two places where we subsequently dug up large quantities of truffles.

Meantime Fritz cut down some branches from the trees, and said, "Here are the means whereby we can carry our game to the shore, either piecemeal or in bulk."

We fastened some of the branches together, and to them we attached cords which we had brought with us. We decided to content ourselves with the head and quarters of the boar. We made five sledges of the branches and leaves, and to these we harnessed our three dogs. We permitted the jackal to run at large. I took the fourth sledge, Fritz and Ernest the fifth. Each of the dogs dragged a leg of the boar, I took

the fourth, while the boys were charged with the enormous head, which they destined for Jack.

It was not without difficulty that we succeeded in transporting our booty to the shore, for the jackal would make a raid at the sledges every now and then and attempt to seize the prey. But at length Fritz relinquished the entire care of the sledge to Ernest, and constituted himself quarter-master of the convoy. He acted his part so well that we reached the shore without accident, where we could unharness the somewhat restive dogs. They did not remain with us a moment, but dashed off to consume the remainder of the slaughtered boar, accompanied by the jackal, and did not return until they had entirely satisfied themselves.

When we were cutting up our sledges to serve as firewood for the evening, we perceived that the branches were covered with a kind of nuts, but which instead of a kernel contained a species of fine cotton, which was not white but yellowish colour, like nankeen, which is made of this yellow cotton that is cultivated near Nankin in China. We carefully put by this material, which would be very precious in my wife's eyes, and we determined to take advantage of the first opportunity to gather a quantity of these nuts, or even to procure some young plants for cultivation at home.

Fritz then took a spade and set about digging a ditch. Ernest assisted him to my great satisfaction.

"We are going to surprise Jack," they said, "by preparing the boar's head, savage-fashion, with truffles, which will be a treat for all of us."

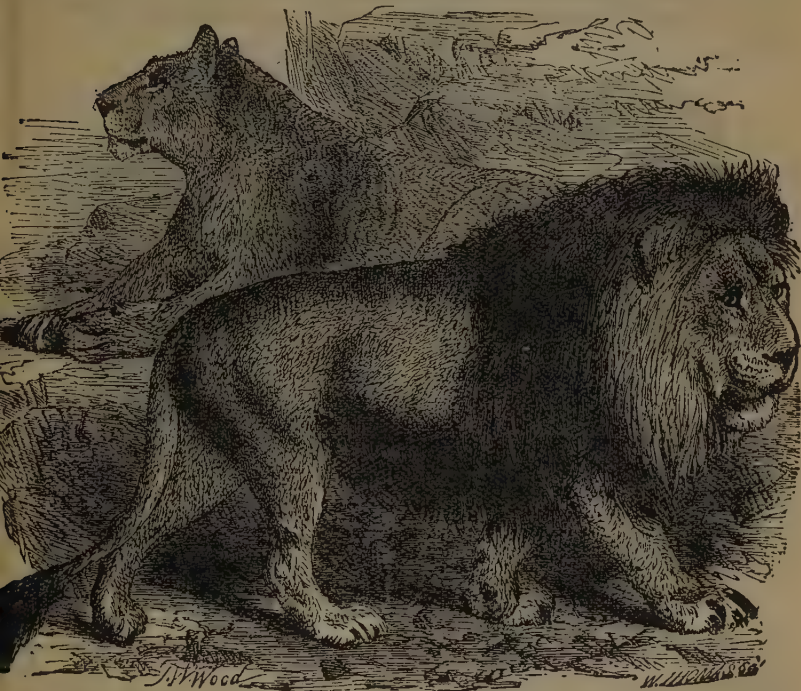
Before long a capital fire was burning merrily in the trench, and in it we suspended the hams to burn off the bristles, and we treated the head in the same way, by means of a red-hot iron. The smell of the burning bristles woke Jack, and he came ashore to assist his brothers in their cookery. I set about getting rid of the scorched bristles, which had not a very pleasant smell. The boys got along very well. They emptied and cleaned out the trench, and in it they placed the boar's head, wrapped up in a bed of leaves, and covered it over with embers, cinders, and red-hot stones. We indulged in a light repast, pending the preparation of the supper, and commenced to smoke the hams. In this occupation we were surprised by the setting sun, so we lighted our fires and began to think about digging up the boar's head.

Suddenly a terrible roar resounded through the forest, and was repeated by the echo from the neighbouring hills and rocks. A shudder pervaded us all, and our blood ran cold. We waited in the hope that the terrible sound would not be repeated, and endeavoured to fancy that it was only caused by the fall of a rock. But before long it was repeated, and even nearer than before.

"This is a most diabolical concert," exclaimed Fritz, rising. He seized his gun, and gazing earnestly round, continued,—

"There is danger afoot. Let us replenish the fire, retreat to the boat, and get your firearms ready. I will go in my canoe and reconnoitre, for it seems to me that the roaring is getting nearer and nearer towards the coast."

As he spoke Fritz hurried away and paddled swiftly off towards the



mouth of the river and quickly disappeared in the gathering gloom. We threw on the fires all the wood we could collect, and, armed with our guns and hunting knives, hastened on board the boat, and made ready either to fire towards the shore or to put off to sea, as occasion should demand.

As we were discussing the situation we perceived Knips, followed by the jackal and the dogs, rush down to the fires, where the monkey kept grimacing and chattering when he perceived we had gone on board

and were at such a distance from the beach as would oblige him to take a bath before he could rejoin us. He therefore squatted upon our roughly made table, and appeared quite terrified. He kept turning his head towards the forest and grinding his teeth, his whole body trembling as if he had ague.

The jackal and the dogs lay down behind the fire. They also kept a ready watch in the direction of the forest, uttered frequent howls and whined dismally at intervals, and occasionally barked furiously, all the time they were listening intently, while their hair stood on end with terror.



The roaring still continued and at less intervals than before, and it appeared to me as if we were in Africa, and on the point of engaging with a troop of leopards or panthers which had been attracted by the smell of the dead boar, and which had frightened the dogs from their repast.

Before long we were startled by the appearance of an immense beast which plunged down in a few bounds and then uttered a terrific roar. We had no difficulty in recognising an enormous lion, much bigger than any we had ever seen in captivity. He appeared to have followed quickly on the trail of the boar's flesh. He paused as we gazed upon him, and the fire seemed to excite his rage. He seated himself like a

cat, on his hind quarters, and fixed his gaze upon it with such an expression of rage and hunger in his eyes which were sometimes turned upon the dogs, sometimes at the meat hanging up close by. All the while he was lashing his sides with his enormous tail, as a cat might do while watching a mouse, and working himself into a greater fury.

After a time the king of the forest was pleased to rise, which he did slowly and with dignity, and began to pace backwards and forwards



before our eyes, all the while lashing himself with his tail as if he were out of humour with himself. His temper vented itself in a fearful roaring; but neither so long nor so loud as before, but in a more gasping and snappish manner, as if he were disappointed and vexed. From time to time he plunged his burning jaws into the neighbouring stream and returned speedily, as if he meditated an attack. I also remarked that his circles, or rather, his semi-circular promenade, became less and less each time he turned, as if he had made up his mind to spring immediately. But

he stretched himself at full length on the sand, and turning towards us, lashed himself even more forcibly, while his angrily gleaming eyes betokened that his rage was rapidly culminating, and that he would soon spring, notwithstanding the distance that intervened between us.

But before I could make up my mind whether I should fire or fly out to sea, a shot was heard, which echoed a hundred times from the surrounding precipices. "Fritz is on the alert," Ernest exclaimed, as he drew a long breath to relieve his surcharged breast; and Jack uttered a ghastly sound, meant for a laugh, which sufficiently betrayed his anxiety. The lion sprang up and roared in a threatening manner, and then remained motionless for a few seconds, staggered, fell on his knees, and at length lay extended motionless on the ground, on the spot where he had been seated but a short time before.

"Hurrah!" cried my sons. "The animal is shot through the heart. He will never move again. Fritz has made a splendid shot. But we had better go after him in case he requires assistance."

"Do you remain in the boat," I said, "with your guns ready, while I jump ashore and reconnoitre."

With two vigorous strokes I gained the beach, and approached the fire. The dogs surrounded me and displayed their joy at my arrival; but they soon left me, and going to the edge of the forest, at the point whence the lion had emerged, they began to howl with all their might and main.

This behaviour made me suspicious. I gazed intently in the direction indicated, and soon made out another lion, but smaller than the former, which was rapidly approaching our camp, but which paid very little attention to the dogs. The new arrival ranged around by the river in the "clearing," no doubt seeking for its companion, which it kept calling in a very anxious manner. This was evidently the lioness, which fortunately had not arrived at the same time as her spouse; for the simultaneous attack of two such monsters would have quite upset us. The female at length discovered her dead mate, and was quickly at his side. She licked his paws, smelt the blood which was flowing from the wound, and then uttered the most lamentable cries, gnashing her teeth all the time, as if she desired nothing better than to avenge his fate.

Bang! A second shot resounded through the wood. The right paw of the lioness was broken, and the dogs immediately launched themselves upon the wounded animal. I had scarcely time to fire another shot, which broke her jaw, when the dogs were upon her. Then began a most fearful encounter, such as I never wish to see again. The darkness, the terrible roaring of the wounded lioness, the barking of the dogs, which told us of their fear and rage, made a great impression on us. I remained for a moment undecided, and the monster took advantage of

the respite to deal poor Bill a blow of her terrible paw. This fearful stroke ripped open the poor animal's chest, and he fell dead at the same moment that his adversary bit the dust. I advanced rapidly with my long hunting-knife, and perceived, by the waning light of the fire, Fritz,



who was also advancing with his loaded gun. I went to meet him, took him by the hand, showed him the field of battle, and invited him to render thanks with me for our merciful preservation from a great and imminent danger.

We announced the joyful tidings of victory to our rear-guard in the boat, who came ashore to join in our triumph. They were delighted to meet us again safe and sound, for they had been very nervous about us, and endeavoured to satisfy them-

selves by repeated embraces that we were actually unhurt.

We quickly relighted the fires, and with burning brands proceeded to examine the scene of the encounter. To the great dismay of all, we perceived that poor Bill was dead, but still holding in his death-grip the neck of the lioness. He was a victim to his courage and fidelity.

"Look," said Ernest, "see what enormous beasts they are. These lions are as big as two young bulls; but their movements were most wonderfully active. It was evident that we could not have fought them, nor could we have escaped on shore. Those immense throats would have swallowed one of us at a gulp, and their claws are fearful to contemplate. But now they are harmless. Heaven has been very good to us."

"Yes," replied Fritz; "The reasoning power that Providence has given to us has enabled us to overcome everything, and has supplied us with arms to conquer the forest king. To-morrow, papa, if you will allow it, I hope to take the trophies of victory from our enemies. But now I think we had better bury our brave Bill by torch light."

I consented, and Fritz and Jack dug a grave. We succeeded, after some difficulty, in detaching the faithful dog from his adversary's neck, and then we examined the wounds received by the others. They were not serious. My sons deposited the brave old dog in his grave, and put up a tombstone to mark the spot, so that we should recognise it if we ever passed that way again.

The occurrences of the night had given us an excellent appetite, which asserted itself now that the excitement had cooled down, and we lost no time in disinterring our roast pig and getting supper ready. But the much-desired meat resembled a cinder more than anything else, and the boys gazed at it in silence, and did not dare to touch it. I did not judge so much from appearances; and after a little examination we found the boar's flesh so good beneath its envelope of burnt skin, that, with the flavour of the truffles to relish it, we made an excellent repast. During our meal the conversation naturally turned upon poor Bill, for whose tombstone Ernest wrote the following inscription:—

HERE LIES

BILL,

A DOG RENOWNED FOR HIS COURAGE AND DEVOTION.

HE PERISHED BENEATH THE CLAWS OF A

FORMIDABLE LIONESS,

DYING IN THE MOMENT OF VICTORY.

This done, we lay down on board our boat for a few hours, and were obliged to protect ourselves against the cold. In the torrid zone, the fresh air of night is very trying to human beings; and, in consequence of the coldness of the nights, many quadrupeds in tropical climates are furnished with warm, thick skins.

At sunrise we set to work to strip the skins from the carcasses of the lion and lioness, and, thanks to my system of inflation, we succeeded in a comparatively short space of time

This having been accomplished, Fritz put some provisions into his canoe, as he did not wish to forego the pleasure of piloting his own boat. We soon weighed anchor, and got ready to quit the Bay of Pearls. We crossed it in a straight line, directing our course towards the opening in the rocks which I described above, and in about an hour and a half we entered the passage, Fritz proving himself an excellent pilot. After we had passed through the reefs, he returned and handed me a letter, saying it had come by the post that morning, but we were asleep when it had arrived.

I was by this time accustomed to these harmless jokes, and willingly played my part in the little comedy, and entered the tent, so as to read the letter undisturbed. To my astonishment, I perceived that Fritz was still cherishing the notion of going to the assistance of the unfortunate shipwrecked lady. I was struck by the folly of this quixotic enterprise, and after a little reflection, I went out to remonstrate with Fritz, and to endeavour to dissuade him from it; but my determination was vain. Fritz had taken himself off, as I could see him now in the distance, paddling away in the opposite direction to that in which we were bound. There was nothing for me now but to bid him good speed; so I shouted to him through the speaking trumpet to be prudent, and so bade him adieu. He did not appear to heed what I said, nor did he make any sign, and soon disappeared behind the promontory which bounded the beautiful bay opposite Church Rock, to which I gave the name of Cape Farewell.

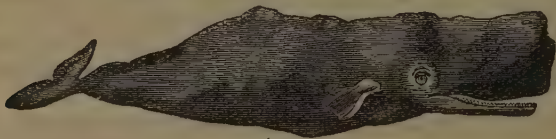
We continued our journey somewhat sadly; for I decided we should not wait for Fritz's return for fear of rendering my wife still more anxious by longer absence. Towards evening we reached Safety Bay. My wife's delight at our appearance was somewhat dashed by the absence of Fritz, while little Frank was much affected by the death of poor Bill. But, on the other hand, the boar's meat and the truffles were welcome, as well as the lions' skins and the edible birds' nests, and, above all, the nankeen cotton and its pods. My wife immediately set about sowing the latter in our vegetable garden. I took care of the lions' skins, and took them next morning to our tannery in Shark Island.

Five days passed in various employments; and all this time we had no news of Fritz, who was never absent from our thoughts. My suggestion to go in search of him therefore met with universal approval, and it was decided that we should proceed as far as Pearl Bay, where we should have the greatest chance of meeting with him. My wife even approved of this, and decided to accompany us when I suggested that we should take the large boat. One beautiful morning we set sail with a favourable wind, and quitted Felsenheim Bay with three cheers, in reply to which the dogs barked joyfully. Before long we sighted the

distant promontory, Church Rock. We furled the sails and ran along the coast slowly, for it was necessary to be very cautious when passing through the numerous reefs. But the current caught us and carried us along with such violence that I found it impossible to prevent the boat striking against an immense rock right in front of us. The blow was so violent that we were all thrown on the deck. We made up our minds that we should capsize, for the block no doubt was resting on the sand; but all at once the vessel righted, and the rock came up to the top of the water, and about ten paces off, we heard a great noise, and a column of water shot into the air and fell in spray all around us.

"Oh, papa!" cried Frank, who was the first to get up, "is not this one of the waterspouts which are so dangerous to sailors?"

"It is not the same thing," I replied. "Waterspouts are electrical phenomena, and are only seen out at sea, and were formerly regarded as very dangerous. They are usually indicated by a whirlwind, which causes the clouds to descend in a kind of funnel into which the water is taken up. This forms the waterspout, and has been stated to be



CACHALOT.

sufficiently powerful to drag up a ship or to damage it considerably; but a cannon shot is quite sufficient to disperse the waterspout."

As I was speaking, the floating block had entirely disappeared. I waited its return to the surface, and told my crew to get one of the cannons ready, so that I might go after him and capture the prey. The floating mass soon appeared; in it we recognised an enormous fish, and we fired the gun with such good aim that we severely wounded the animal, which plunged into the deep again. It soon reappeared, however, beating the water into foam with its tail, and spouting high in the air a column of water tinged with blood. At length his struggles became less violent; the boys fired a second time with so true an aim that the enormous beast grounded on the sandbank, and never moved.

"Ah, there he is! Capitally done!" cried the boys. "Papa, do you know what fish this is?"

"I believe it is a cachalot, which we aroused from a sleep somewhat rudely."

We then approached the sandbank, in order to examine our prize more nearly; it appeared to be about forty feet in length. At that moment he seemed to come to life, and his tail moved convulsively; but it was only a muscular contraction, for the animal was dead. We were all delighted at this unexpected triumph; but our attention was directed to another object, which was by no means reassuring. At some distance off we thought we could perceive a savage in a canoe, who suddenly disappeared behind a reef, and remained motionless some time as if to watch us, he then disappeared altogether behind a point of rock.

This discovery struck me as very singular. I gave orders to load all the cannons and to prepare our small arms, and to arrange, as quickly as possible, round the deck, the numerous bundles of maize stalks which we had collected for the manufacture of potass. These bundles we hoped would serve as a protection against the natives' spears or arrows.

These preparations did not prevent us from keeping a vigilant lookout, and we soon perceived another canoe, carrying, like the former, but a single rower, and who also appeared to be a scout. I judged it right to unfurl our white ensign, thinking that if a troop of savages were in ambush they would understand by it that we were friendly and send us a deputation, but they did not do so. This savage disappeared also. He soon reappeared, however, near the tongue of land, and it seemed that the spies wished to get their information concerning us one by one. We approached the spot where the last one had appeared. I took the speaking trumpet and shouted a few words of welcome in the Malay language. These words I had carefully studied from a book of travels. This challenge had no result, and Jack suggested that I should pronounce a few very energetic words in English, which might perhaps have a better effect. While I was laughing at his remark he seized the speaking trumpet, and gave vent to few crude sailors' expressions, so that I was obliged to take the speaking trumpet from him, and desire him to hold his tongue.

But what was this? The savage appeared with a green branch in his hand, and paddled towards us. We laughed to see that Jack had succeeded so well, and regarded the new comer with curiosity. But in a few moments we burst into a roar of laughter when we distinguished a small hump-backed man with black face and hands riding upon a morse, and making friendly signs, and to whom we waved our hands and made most comical gestures.

"It is Fritz! it is Fritz!" they all called out. "Fritz himself!"

My wife, who had been looking at the apparition with some emotion, and in silence, made no remark now, but her face lit up, and tears of joy rolled down her cheeks. We drew the lad and his canoe on board our vessel, and embraced him so often that our faces and hands were almost as black as his, and this gave us new cause for mirth.



CHAPTER LV.

Fritz's Return.—The Stranger Discovered.—The Smoking Rock.—The Shipwrecked English Lady.—Miss Jenny not "Sir Edward."—The Wolves.—Recovering the Jackal.—Miss Jenny's Industry when on the Rock.



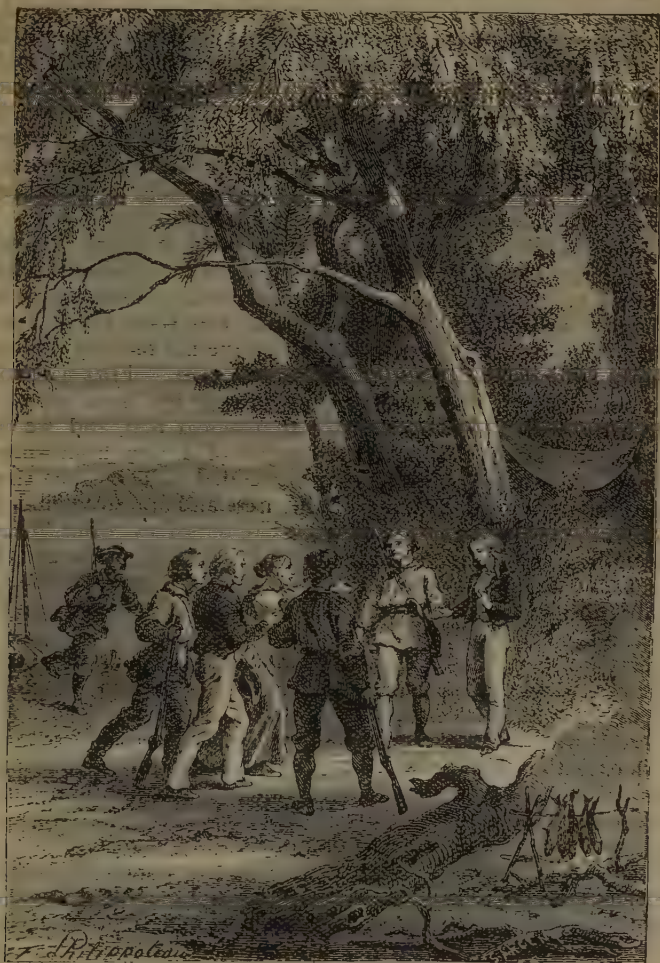
SOON as Fritz had released himself from our caresses he promised to explain all; but questions poured upon him so quickly that he found it impossible to reply to every one of them. He was also obliged to keep the dogs quiet, for they were barking round him most joyously, and jumping upon him so violently, that they threatened to overturn him. Knips was the only one who did not appear to appreciate him; he jumped immediately on the young man's shoulder, and made faces at us as if he prided himself on having recognised his master although disguised.

At length I took Fritz apart to ask him a few questions privately. I first demanded whether he had obtained the object of his expedition, and secondly, why he had played us such a trick.

Fritz replied briefly. "To the first question I can answer Yes, thank Heaven; to the second, I must frankly confess that I took you for Malay pirates, and I wished to startle you by appearing here and there as if there were a number of savages. That is why I played the part of so many scouts in different places, and why I disguised myself. I proposed to go in search of the Englishwoman again during the night, for I have found her and left her on a small island, and I hoped to escape by the vaulted passage and to arrive unperceived at Felsenheim."

I should have been very glad to have questioned my son more closely, but my wife insisted on his taking off his disguise, for she said she could not bear to see him dressed up like a savage. He soon washed off his paint and appeared himself again. But when I wished to get some more information from him he anticipated my questions by asking why

we had fired the cannon when we entered the bay. "I was very much alarmed," he added, "for I did not expect you, and was not thinking



of our yacht, so I had the more reason for believing that it was a vessel carrying two guns, which I believed to be hidden in the estuary."

It was now necessary to seek for a convenient anchoring ground, and Fritz suggested the island upon which he had left his companion. I smiled at the attraction which this place had for him; however, I consented with pleasure, for I believed it my duty follow up what Fritz had so well commenced. It would be impossible to describe the activity which he displayed from this moment. He spread the sails, told me how I was to steer the boat, jumped from the deck of the yacht into his canoe, which he had again launched, so as to have more space on deck. He then went on ahead, and piloted us to a small picturesque island in the great Pearl Bay, where two narrow tongues of land formed a safe anchorage, and one even more sheltered than we could have had on the mainland. There we fastened our boat to a tree.

Fritz jumped ashore, and without turning round or saying a word to us, he ran direct to a small wood, where, between the trees and under the shade of the palms, we perceived a small hut made of branches, Hottentot fashion. We followed him closely, and very soon saw in front of the hut a fireplace made of stones, and on the fire burning thereupon, was placed an immense shell instead of a saucepan. Fritz had not yet noticed our approach, and kept looking through the trees crying out, "Hallo here," with all his might. We approached him, and we heard at the same moment a rustling in the boughs of a tree, from whence a young man dressed as a sailor quickly descended. The young stranger remained motionless at the foot of the tree, and appeared undecided what to do in the face of an armed troop like ourselves. But Fritz soon put an end to our mutual embarrassment by taking off his hat and throwing it into the air, and cried out in a loud voice, "Long live the young Lord Montrose of the Smoking Rock—shall we not welcome him to our family as a brother and a friend?"

"He is welcome," we all replied simultaneously, and he then approached us rapidly with much grace and ease of manner, which immediately won our good opinion. As head of the family, I advanced to shake hands with him, and received him with the appearance of gladness with which I should have welcomed a long lost child. He responded timidly and in a few words, and then turning to my wife he begged her kind offices and protection.

Both my wife and I understood that Fritz did not wish to betray the sex of the stranger before his brothers. We recommended him, then, without any further explanation, to their care and regard, and told them what we thought would be the best means of winning a stranger's favour. The boys ran off to the yacht, and brought back a table, some chairs, all sorts of provisions and etceteras, so that our supper became quite a feast. My wife was never sparing of her provisions, and she now put forth all her skill to make the repast worthy of the occasion. The young

"lord," who had adopted the name of Sir Edward, very nearly betrayed her sex by the skill with which she aided my wife in her culinary occupations.

Some flasks of our best hydromel, and some of the old Canary wine, was not wanting at our repast, and indeed circulated so freely, that my sons very soon got very cheerful indeed. But this often happens when young people find themselves for the first time in the society of people whom they desire to please. Their enjoyment increased—they joked and laughed, and at length became rather too boisterous for the silent and modest young stranger, and I judged it was time to give the signal for departure, which appeared to me so much the more prudent, as Fritz was much more irritable than usual. I therefore gave the order for bed, and I was immediately obeyed by the younger ones. Sir Edward wished to retire to his aerial chamber in the tree whence he had come down, as if from the sky, but my wife would not permit that, and insisted that he should come on board the yacht to the comfortable bed which we willingly ceded to our new guest.

"Our new friend is not at all particular," said Fritz, "for he has slept for many nights in the tree, while I have reposed in the Hottentot hut; but our greatest difficulty was to remain in the place, and we actually passed some nights on the rocks out at sea, for fear of meeting some wild beast if we remained on shore. We embarked in the canoe, covered ourselves with reeds, and after having loaded our guns and pistols, we commended ourselves to Providence, and so passed the night. We have spent several days on this island, because the canoe greatly wanted repairs."

My wife took great interest in this recital; but immediately she saw that our new guest showed signs of fatigue and wished for repose, she accompanied her to bed. My sons on the contrary, whose curiosity had been aroused by Fritz, remained for some time before the fire, pestering their elder brother to tell them the details of his expedition, and why he had undertaken it.

"What put it into your head," said Frank, "to go in pursuit of a man of whom you knew nothing?"

"Or perhaps you have the gift of a second sight," said Ernest, "or had a vision, which showed you the man sitting on the rock in the middle of the sea calmly smoking his pipe."

"Or most likely he sent you a pigeon-post letter addressed to the Order of Knights who redress all wrongs, and are protectors of the oppressed, to which Order you most certainly belong."

Fritz replied good humouredly to this quizzing, and related his adventure with the sea-bird, and got so very enthusiastic over the recital that he called our new guest Miss Jenny several times instead of Sir Edward,

and finished by saying how much the poor Englishwoman had suffered. His brothers were not slow to discover the secret, but made signs to each other, and continued to speak of their new companion as the young Englishman, or as Sir Edward. When Jack asked him at length whether he had understood the Malay words they had spoken, Fritz replied, "Yes, certainly, but that was an additional reason for me to escape, as my thoughts were full of Malay pirates, Sir Edward having often told me that they came into these seas where he had been shipwrecked. But," continued Fritz, "when I heard the English expressions, although they were somewhat energetic, I began to think that a ship had come in search of poor Miss Jenny, and I ——"

He was here interrupted by a roar of laughter from his brothers. "You have betrayed yourself," they exclaimed; "here is Sir Edward now transformed into a Miss Jenny, and our future brother is nothing less than a graceful and amiable sister. Long live Miss Jenny."

Fritz was somewhat upset at being thus found out, but he took it very good naturedly, and joined in the cheers uttered by his brothers, and soon afterwards we all retired to rest.

The next morning the three younger boys could not help showing that they knew the secret, and they greeted the young lady by the title of sister, and by her name Jenny, dwelling on the latter with a malicious pleasure. The poor girl blushed and scarcely dared to look up, but she ended by confessing to the soft impeachment.

Our breakfast was a very cheerful meal, and was principally composed of chocolate, manufactured by Fritz, which appeared very much to the young lady's taste. I expressed to her a wish that she would, at a favourable moment, relate to me some of the events of her life, and I thought that meantime it would be prudent to go in search of the cachalot, which would be unfit for use if we did not proceed to cut it up at once.

Frank wanted to know if the cachalot was better to eat than the whale. I replied that I did not think so, but I said that we could get an excellent store of oil from the animal. I further added that we could also obtain the substance called spermaceti from the numerous cavities in its enormous head, and which sometimes amounts to as much as twenty tons; this would be very useful to us, for the oil congeals almost immediately it is cold, and is used in the manufacture of soap and candles. My only care was to find sufficient utensils to carry it in; for though we had a number of bags, we had no barrels or casks, except those which contained our hydromel or fresh water.

Miss Jenny then modestly said (and in this she was very different from my sons, who were much too hasty in communicating their ideas) that if I would try canvas bags as they did in England, she thought it could be carried.

This appeared to be an excellent idea, and I resolved to make the attempt without delay.

We soon reached the sandbank, where the monster was still lying high and dry. Our dogs immediately made a dash at the fish, but scarcely had we quickened our pace to follow them, when from behind the carcase arose such a howling and growling that we knew a battle had begun between our dogs and some hidden enemy, and in fact we very soon perceived that a troop of wolves were feasting on the carcase of the



THE WOLF.

cachalot, which they considered their own property, and had accordingly disputed the right of the dogs to partake of their repast.

Two wolves were already stretched motionless on the sand, and two others were firmly held by the dogs. As we advanced, the remainder of the troop took to flight, and amongst them we recognised two or three jackals, which had formed the rear guard of the party. Our own jackal, which was walking quietly beside Jack, no sooner caught sight of his friends, than he bounded after them. Jack was very much vexed at the

flight of his favourite, and gazed wistfully after him. The others wished to fire upon the fugitives, but I prevented him, fearing we should frighten the ladies.

Meantime the wolves had been overpowered by the dogs, but our defenders had not come off unscathed by any means. Jack set himself to tend them, and we could perceive the fugitives also licking their wounds. I then took one of the sacks, and stretched it wide open over the massive skull of the cachalot, while Fritz with spiked shoes climbed like a cat upon the slippery monster, and cut open its enormous head. Immediately he began to shovel the sperm into the bag which I held open.

In order to prevent the liquid escaping, I placed my two younger sons close by with small shovels and a flask of water, and told them to keep the bag constantly wetted, so that no sperm should escape. Fritz continued to shovel it into the sacks which were very soon filled. I was obliged to relieve him, for the work was very fatiguing, and we even filled the two small sacks which we had destined for other purposes. We covered them all over with wet clay, and then went to the yacht for a supply of reeds, which we disposed round the sacks so as to protect them from the sea-birds, which were sure to collect around the carcase.

We arrived on the island, where we landed the bodies of the wolves, and were very glad to find that my wife and her young friend were engaged in preparing an excellent repast, which had a new feature in it, namely a species of sauce made of the eggs of the land crab, which are found in large quantities in the Caribbean Islands. After dinner I experienced some uneasiness respecting the division of our time and occupation during the next day, for it was necessary on the one hand to take the wolves' skins, and on the other to bring home the sperm. But Miss Jenny consoled me by saying, "I wish to be of use, and you shall see what I can do; if you have no objection, I will transport the sack hither in the morning, and I also expect I shall be able to reclaim your jackal, but as I must use a little sorcery for that, I ought to be alone. However, I shall require a small piece of the wolf's skin, so that my incantation may be the more readily successful."

These suggestions were received somewhat sarcastically by my younger sons, and they made several malicious remarks, at which I was much embarrassed, for I wished to avoid any unpleasantness.

"Ah, well," said Jack, as he sighed satirically, "I should like to see that, as the blind man said." Frank was of opinion that it was "all cry and little wool." Ernest made allusion to Circe; and in fact there was a running fire of quizzing directed against the young Englishwoman. Jack, Frank, and Ernest, appeared very much piqued. Fritz alone kept aloof from these jests, and strongly disapproved of them. Miss Jenny, who

quitted us somewhat hastily with a small piece of wolf-skin, though she said nothing, appeared to be annoyed. She went towards my wife, who was at that moment busy, took her by the arm, and led her to the yacht, where I left her so that she might go to bed if she felt so inclined.

I resolved to keep a watch upon my sons for the future, as this display of ill-temper towards the girl was to me incomprehensible. When she had left us I heard them remark one to the other, I think that girl is pretty impudent.

I now perceived that their motive was jealousy, and I recollected that it was only a very short time since they had given up teasing each other, and I supposed that this new arrival had stirred their feelings again for fear she would take precedence of them by her superiority of mind. It is also possible that these poor boys, half-children as they were, and convinced of their want of politeness and good manners, did not wish to appear simple or timid, and that they resorted to the system of teasing to divert our young friend's attention from their deficiencies. All these considerations induced me to make every effort to preserve amicable relations amongst them all, while I kept the three young boys at a distance, so that they might not exercise any influence whatever upon our guest.

While I was reflecting upon these things, my wife was endeavouring to console poor Jenny, who was very much mortified, and trying to find excuses for her sons' rudeness. The good-tempered girl was easily appeased, and set about making a muzzle for the jackal, which she hoped to bring back and tame once again. Her work consisted in cutting up the wolf's skin into small straps, and at length she finished it.

Next morning we were up at an earlier hour than the children. We slept ashore. Miss Jenny made her preparations for departure, and took a bladder of fresh water, a small bag of pemmican, and some other provisions. She started in Fritz's canoe and directed her course by a sand-bank where the cachalot lay. At first I wished to prevent her, but she escaped me just as I thought I had succeeded, yet I determined to keep a watchful eye upon her while I was engaged skinning the wolves.

She paddled rapidly towards the sand-bank, and so well had she chosen her time that she arrived at high water as the tide was wetting the bottom of the sacks. She leaped on shore and fastened the bags with strings to a cable, and towed them after her; the sperm being entirely congealed, floated of its own accord, and was very easy to bring home.

The jackal, however, gave her more trouble, for she was obliged to land on the neighbouring coast where I lost sight of her for some time, and was very anxious about her. But so well had she laid her plans

that she succeeded in that enterprise also. She began to eat some of her provisions, occasionally throwing a morsel here and there, and calling the jackal by name in a friendly voice. Before long the poor beast which was very hungry approached her, she then flung him some pieces of soaked biscuit to a less distance every time, and at length threw him a piece of pemmican close to her feet which he gladly took. At that moment she cast a rope round his neck, all the while talking to him in an endearing manner. She then put the muzzle on gently, led him into the canoe and skilfully tied his hind legs. She then placed him in one of the openings, so that her body effectually prevented his escape, and

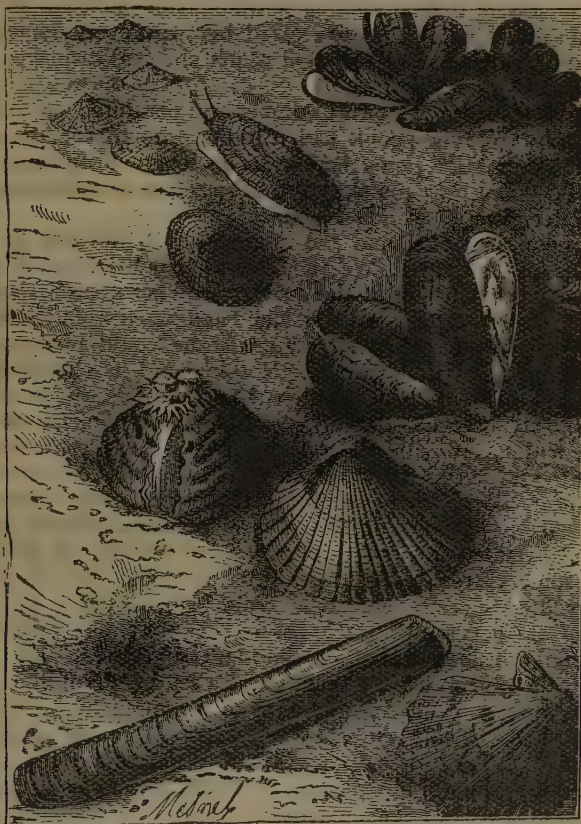


then paddled home again to Mount Pleasant about mid-day. But when she thought she was coming in sight of us, she put on the head of the jackal one of the hats which she had made of reeds, while she was upon the smoking rock, and wrapped round his shoulders a piece of cloth, so that in the distance the poor jackal had all the appearance of a small passenger, and might have deceived a conjuror.

Fritz and I were just on the point of entering the yacht to go in search of Miss Jenny, when she appeared round the promontory and somewhat startled us by the appearance of her new companion. All the boys except Fritz loudly expressed their surprise, in observations that

were not very encouraging to the young lady, but fortunately she could not hear them.

Jack cried out, "Where has our new sister fished out this new brother? it seems in this place that people grow up like mushrooms."



"No," said Ernest; "it is the magician who has assisted her in this sorcery."

Fritz advanced almost mechanically into the water and kept gazing into the canoe in wonder. Suddenly he laughed out right, clapped his hands, and jumped so high in the water that he splashed us all. He

then seized Jack in his arms and exclaimed, "There he is, that is he; that stupid jackal of yours has come back in a more respectable form, like a runaway who has made his fortune abroad."

We were all very soon put in possession of the facts, and laughed heartily at the curious figure of the jackal, while Miss Jenny remained quite self-possessed, though wearing a triumphant smile as she leaped ashore and saluted us all. We received her with every demonstration of joy, and heartily admired the skill which she had displayed in performing both her promises.

We soon afterwards sat down to dinner and consulted as to what we should do, for the young people had a great desire to see the smoking rock upon which Miss Jenny had lived so long. Miss Jenny herself, as well as Fritz and his parents, preferred to return to Felsenheim where we wished to welcome our new friend.

This opinion prevailed, and the afternoon was devoted to making preparations for departure. We then learnt that Fritz and Miss Jenny had another surprise for us in the discovery of her treasures which had been hidden in the bushes, and which she had saved from the wreck, or which she had made with what materials she could pick up. They included various household utensils, clothing, and a number of things which she had made of bones, feathers, beaks of birds, shells, etc.

Amongst the most useful objects, we remarked a piece of sponge, which she had mixed with moss and dried sea-weed to make a fire; some long tresses of her hair which she had used for fishing lines, with mother-of-pearl hooks, some needles made of fish bones, some bodkins of birds' beaks, some small needle cases of 'pelicans' feathers, and seals' bones, a seal-skin sewn up for a bottle, a lamp made of an immense shell with some cotton threads torn from her fichu, and another shell which served as a saucepan, some seals' bladders, and an immense quantity of smaller shells, which served her for eating and drinking purposes, and a little collection of wild plants and seeds.

Amongst the objects of the toilette was a hat made of the pelican's pouch, which was expanded to the form of a capote by feathers of the same bird, so as to shade the face and neck. A couple of work bags embroidered with her own hair, a vest with seal-skin sleeves, and other articles of dress made of birds' feathers, a belt, as well as stockings, and shoes made of seal-skins sewn together.

Miss Jenny's jewellery consisted of very few articles,—a gold comb and two sets of pearls, which she had on when she was wrecked. Some teeth of the comb were wanting, which she had used as pins. She also possessed some beautiful tortoise-shells, in which she kept mosses and sea-weed which she found good to eat, as well as some amber. I may also mention a small net which she had made of strips of seal-skin,



CHAPTER LVI.

The Cormorant.—Miss Jenny's Fishing.—An Expedition.—Fritz's Narrative of his Excursion.—The Alligator.—Reaches the Smoking Rock.—Home again at Last.



We had agreed to make a short stay at Pearl Bay, and we were up betimes next morning to start on our journey. But Miss Jenny had another surprise in store for us, and one which pleased us extremely. She had hidden behind the bushes a tame cormorant which she had fastened by the leg. She introduced the bird to us, and she stated that she had taught it to catch fish for her, as the Chinese tame birds for that purpose.

We were all soon on board the yacht, except Fritz, who led the way in the canoe. We proceeded slowly and reached the bay just before dinner time, where we cast anchor and then went ashore.

We found everything as we had left it: the tables and chairs were still there; the hole in which we had roasted the boar's flesh was untouched, but the atmosphere was purified; the pearl oysters were no longer offensive, and the algæ were dry; the skeletons of the lions and the boar had been completely stripped of flesh, and were bleached by the sun and air.

First of all we pitched our tent so as to be sheltered from the sun by day and from the dews by night. We then set to work to detach the pearls from the oyster shells, an occupation in which we displayed much activity. We did not lose one. Our joy was great when we had collected a cup-full of pearls of various sizes and of great beauty. But what was the use of all these treasures? It seemed that Miss Jenny was the wisest of all, for she collected, with the greatest care, the small tufts of cotton or filaments of the shells, rather than the glittering pearls. The active young girl soon left us, with my wife, when the latter proceeded to light the fire and to prepare dinner, and she promised us a dish of fish and a roast fowl for our supper.

My wife smiled incredulously at the first promise, and said that she did not think that a dish of fish for seven persons could be so easily procured ; but Miss Jenny smiled too, and jumping into the canoe with her cormorant, pushed off into the bay.

Here she set her fisher-bird to work, and passing a large copper ring over its neck so that it might not swallow the fish, she let it go and ceased to row. It was a very interesting sight to see how the bird plunged into the sea, from time to time emerging with a large fish, sometimes a herring, then a salmon, which he carried to his young mistress and then plunged again for another victim.



In a very short time Miss Jenny had performed her promise. She released the bird from the ring, and gave him some fish as a reward.

"Indeed !" exclaimed my wife, as the fish were laid at her feet, "we have a little fairy for our companion who can perform some wonderful things at sea as well as some miracles on land. Look at the way in which she recovered the jackal !"

Miss Jenny smiled pleasantly ; and while we were present, promised us the roast fowl for supper if I would lend her the said jackal to go hunting with, and she at the same moment turned to ask Jack's permission.

"I do not like to let him go out," replied Jack, "more especially since he has taken to wandering; but I may of course demand something for his hire if I lend him."

"I will make you a present of the muzzle, my dear Jack," said Miss Jenny.

"Many thanks," replied Jack. "So now you may go and hunt how you please, and we shall have roast meat for our supper."

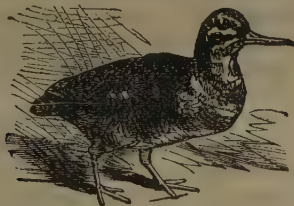
"But, my dear young lady," I said, "you will surely require my assistance in your hunting; and this afternoon I must remain here to see after the potash, etc.; so——"

"And may I ask, papa, if you have got the vessels ready to preserve and transport these things?"

"Well, well; you think of everything, my dear," I replied, "and your young eyes are better able to find things out than my old head is. It seems, then, that I cannot set to work to make the lime and the soap."

"But, papa," said Ernest, "I do not know why you should worry about that, since we have plenty of gypsum and a soap-tree."

"You are always an idle fellow, Ernest," I replied. "Why do you



not do better when you can? Besides, the lime will do very well indeed for our buildings."

"Yes, dear papa," replied Jenny; "do not disturb yourself. Do you burn as much of the lime as you wish, and by mid-day to-morrow I shall have provided the necessary vessels to keep it in; but will you let Fritz and Jack go with me for a little, and lend me a double-barrelled gun?"

"Very well, my dear girl," I replied. "If all your enterprises turn out as successfully as they have hitherto done, I can refuse you nothing; but pray be careful, for the country is full of wild beasts, and it is not to be expected that a girl of your age can know much about fire-arms."

"Oh," said Jenny, "it is not for nothing that my father was a colonel, and a first-rate sportsman, and I am well accustomed to handle a rifle."

The little troop of hunters set off towards the truffle wood, and we soon heard a shot fired. We afterwards learnt that the young Englishwoman had shot a bird very like a woodcock. The boys accordingly

treated her with more consideration, and a rivalry sprang up as to who should provide the most game for supper. The birds fell in great numbers, and the jackal retrieved them; so the game-bags were quickly filled, and there was still plenty of time for Miss Jenny to set about making the barrels to hold the lime. She chose for this purpose some medium-sized trees, and with Jack's and Fritz's assistance she stripped them of their bark, so that they only had to join the bark at one side, and fix a small plank at the top and bottom. She thus constructed barrels about three or four feet high, which, if not elegant or very strong, would serve admirably for the present. She made six of them, but she left them in the wood after they had been shaped.

Towards evening, before going away, she suggested that we should cut down a certain number of branches of the bind-weed, so that they might serve as staves for the barrels. The young people then paid another visit to the truffles, and returned to head-quarters with a large quantity. They had met with no adventure whatever, and we welcomed them joyfully, and the whole party set to work to pluck the birds for supper. The truffles were washed, and we ate some of them raw, and found them very good. While supper was getting ready, we amused ourselves by choosing and sorting the pearls according to the different sizes, and we found we had about four hundred, many of which were as large as a small nut; but the greater part were not much bigger than the head of a large pin.

We wished to make Miss Jenny a present of a dozen of the most beautiful, as a token of our regard; but she refused the gift, and begged us to put the pearls with our other treasures, so that they could be divided later on, if opportunity offered. She then asked if we would make her a present of the silky threads from the shells, as she wished to make a light hat of them, and that would be more acceptable to her than all the pearls of the ocean.

After supper I announced that it would be necessary for me to sit up part of the night to burn the lime. Fritz was ready to join me; for he wished to complete the barrels, and then all the younger ones proposed to assist him, on condition that he would relate to them the adventures he had met with when in search of their new sister: for up to the present time they had heard no details.

Miss Jenny rose and said, "I will go to my new mamma, and while we are preparing for bed I will tell her the narrative simply, which Fritz will no doubt communicate to his audience in a manner more poetical and with more embellishment than I can hope to do." The young lady then made us a mischievous curtsy, and trusted we should have patience to listen to the long story, and ran away.

I then began the burning of the lime. My sons occupied themselves



TOUCANS.

in making the staves, and Fritz commenced an eloquent yet somewhat prolix account of his expedition, which I will take the liberty to abridge and simplify considerably.

"No doubt you remember," he began, "that when I left you, and

started off in my canoe, the sea was calm ; but personally I was very much agitated, for I was thinking a great deal of the shipwrecked lady, and, besides, I was somewhat nervous respecting myself, for I thought that perhaps I might be cast on some shore, and not be able to join you again, and I pictured your anxiety and sorrow. So I was divided, you see, between hopes and fears, and very often I repented of having set out. But, nevertheless, I did not lose courage, and put my trust in Providence, as I had faith in my good intentions, and also hoped that perhaps my expedition would bring me into contact with men once more, and we should find means of quitting this desert island.

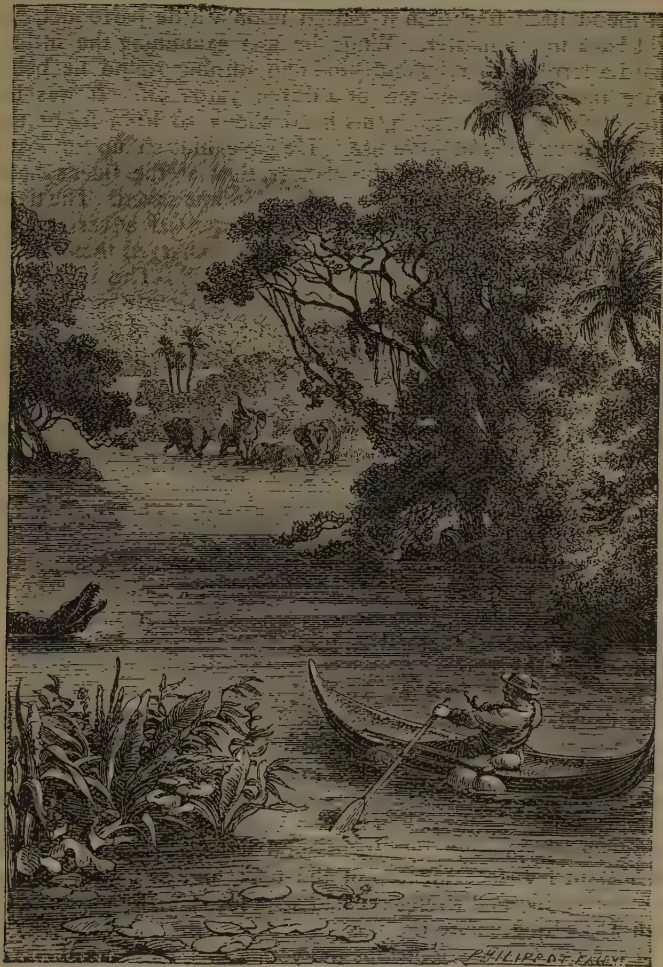
"I struck at once out to sea ; but I saw that my position would be very perilous if the wind blew strong, so I luffed up again, and though somewhat against my will, followed all the windings of the coast, thinking it most prudent to do so ; but at nightfall I had made very little actual progress. I did not dare to pass the night on shore, for I did not feel disposed to have a fight with any lions, and therefore I directed my course towards a high rock, about a quarter of a league from shore, and was very anxious to see if any smoke was rising from it, in which case I should have arrived at my journey's end most satisfactorily. But I only saw a naked reef, where, however, I found a sheltered corner, which kept me from the night-breeze, and on which I found a ledge by which I could sleep. I slept very quietly, and my supper, as well as my breakfast, next day, was of uncooked meat ; for I did not wish to make a fire, fearing an attack from savage beasts.

"Next morning I continued my search with more confidence ; and though, as a rule, I kept near the shore, I visited every high rock I caught sight of. The coast was unchanging and sandy ; but at a little distance inland I noticed thick forests, interwoven with brushwood and brambles. Some of the shrubs I took for pepper plants, because amongst them were a number of toucans, or pepper birds. I occasionally stopped rowing to observe those birds, which were plucking at the fruits with their immense beaks, then throwing the food in the air and catching it again in their mouths. There were a great variety of birds, of almost every known species ; but I did not fire on them, as I wished to economise my powder.

"Very soon I left all the reefs behind me, and the bay stretched out unbroken before me, which made me think that I had reached an arm of the open sea. I entered on the navigation bravely, and did not notice any current, for it was exactly high water, and there was very little need to use my paddles."

I pass over the thousand and one details of Fritz's navigation. A traveller likes to tell everything ; but his prolixity and repetitions are not always to the taste of his readers, so I may summarize a portion of his

narrative by stating that he saw a number of very formidable animals, some quite new to him, such as hippopotami, a giraffe, orang-outangs, and a number of other animals.



vampires, elephants, rhinoceros, and a cayman or crocodile. He even had a combat with the tiger, which killed his faithful eagle under the following circumstances:—

In the course of the morning he happened to land, and delighted with the varied prospect before him, he remained to admire it, and to listen to the singing of the birds. He had let his eagle loose, which no sooner found itself free than it darted upon a little parroquet, which it brought back to its master. While he was examining the little victim he heard a terrible roar behind him, and turning round he beheld an immense tiger only about ten or a dozen yards off. It was too late to think of firing, and, besides, his hand shook so from fright that the shot would have been of little use. He gave himself up for lost, when the eagle, as if it appreciated the danger, flew at the tiger's head, and endeavoured to tear out the brute's eyes. He was saved. The tiger, fully occupied in defending himself from this unexpected adversary, took no notice of Fritz, who seized his pistols and discharged them so close to his enemy that the bullets penetrated its skull. The tiger fell dead, uttering a fearful roar. But the joy of the victory was completely clouded, for one of the shots had mortally wounded the faithful bird, which soon fell dead upon the tiger's body. He picked up the poor bird, and with tears in his eyes carried it to his canoe.

I will now resume Fritz's narrative in his own words.

"But soon another object demanded my attention, which filled me with joy, and called forth all my energy. Having paddled round some neighbouring reefs, I perceived in the far distance a little rocky island, from which ascended a thin column of smoke. This I thought is the smoking rock upon which the Englishwoman is wrecked. I paddled as fast as I could towards the island, my heart beating with hope and joy. It was in vain that reason whispered 'it may be a volcano;' the inspiration of my heart, founded on the note which the bird had brought, told me to hope. I never thought of pirates or savages, and I might have paid dearly for this stupidity.

"I made direct for the smoke, and approached near enough to be able to distinguish a human being. But the smoke mounted from behind a rock, and I feared that I should be obliged to go round the island. Fortunately I perceived, a little on one side of me, some flat stones on which I could land. I jumped ashore as eagerly as ever William Tell did, not to make my escape, but to make a search. Some stones, evidently piled up by human hand, indicated a little staircase, and in an instant I was at the top of the rock, and saw with a joyful but mute surprise, the first stranger I had seen for so many years. A young woman was sitting before the fire.

"At the noise of my footsteps the young girl looked up, clasped her hands with a thankful look to heaven, and silently and without movement awaited my approach. Thanks to a happy inspiration I halted a short distance away, so that I should not startle her by a too sudden

advance. At length I said in a voice choked with emotion, in as good English as I could muster,—

“‘I am the liberator whom your appeal has reached in the mercy of Heaven.’

“I did not know whether I pronounced these words properly, for on subsequent occasions Miss Jenny had some difficulty in understanding me, but she has told me more than once since, that she intuitively guessed at what I was saying, though she could not then recall any of the words I used. At any rate we understood each other at the first moment, and I was under the influence of such a strange emotion that I could not speak. For some time we thought nothing of food or water, of a ship or place of safety, of men, nor of any hope of returning to civilized society. We put to each other questions and answers, but neither of us well understood the other. The young lady, however, recovered her composure before I did, and silently set about preparing supper, which gave us the opportunity to speak more calmly. As night came on, Miss Jenny retired to the farther end of a grotto, where she had arranged a sort of curtain of reeds and sea-weeds. I laid down across the entrance to keep guard.

“Next morning the young lady was coming out of the grotto just as I was beginning to fall asleep, and her invitation to breakfast awoke me from a sound nap. As the sea was not very rough that day, and as I had persuaded the young lady to embark with me and come home, we prepared to put on board the canoe all her effects and curious things which she had so cleverly made. Every moment I found new opportunities to admire the perseverance and skill with which Miss Jenny had fashioned so many objects in the space of the last two years, or two years and a half, she had been on the rock. In my great enthusiasm I compared her industry to that of the famous Crusoe, and I thought how difficult it was to have made the things so skilfully which were in themselves so difficult to make. The modest girl deprecated my praise, pleaded the absence of all other employment; she had not done much after all, and in Europe with proper tools a very ordinary person would have done double or treble the work.

“During those two days on the rock, and while we were sailing home Miss Jenny told me of her residence in India, whither she had gone, when quite a child; of her voyage and shipwreck, of her escape to the rock, and of her residence upon it, all of which would make a very interesting story, if you, papa, would only write it out. The sea was calm, and our return was rapid. If anything had happened to the canoe, we should have stopped on Mount Pleasant Island, where I had already recounted the circumstances of my voyage, which it will be superfluous to repeat.”



CHAPTER LVII. *at home and*

Miss Jenny's History.—Her Shipwreck.—Her Existence on the Rock.—Welcome! Our Daughter!—The Rainy Season.



FRITZ'S narrative was prolonged till midnight, but his audience was by no means fatigued, for his account of his adventures was very exciting. Nevertheless I suggested we should go to bed; but no one was sleepy, and in fact such a new prospect was opening to us by this addition to our family circle that we were very restless.

It had been agreed that we should remain two days longer at Pearl Bay, but the situation offered so many pleasant excursions that I did not like to fix that as a limit; meantime, as the morning had advanced, I called up my people; we then breakfasted, and chatted for an hour, for Fritz's narrative had rather excited than satisfied the general curiosity, and Jenny would get no peace until she had acquainted us with the incidents of her life. The young girl was too intelligent and too impatient to tell her story so quietly as Fritz had done. She interrupted herself every moment either to attend to the fire or to the table service, or to choose her sentences. Her story is briefly as follows:—



After the death of her mother, and when she was scarcely seven years of age, she had gone out to India with her father, Sir William Montrose, who was a major in an English regiment. She was an only child, and, the sole object of her father's care, had accompanied him from station to station, so her education had been somewhat neglected. Her father, who was a good officer and keen sportsman as well as an educated man, might perhaps, as sometimes happens in similar cases where there is one only daughter, have moulded his child into an Amazon, if an intelligent servant had not taken great care of her young

mistress, and developed in her the politeness and good manners so desirable in her sex. So well had she succeeded in Jenny's case that to all the independence of a brave youth, Miss Montrose united the reserve and modest bearing of an English lady. She loved her father too well not to try to please him in everything and to expose herself to the fatigues of many journeys as well as to dangerous and laborious hunting excursions. On the other hand she had a too keen sense of right, and well formed a judgment, not to take into consideration all that was useful and beautiful amongst ladies' occupations, and in fact Heaven appeared to have favoured her, so to speak, with a double education, so that she could conduct herself one day in danger with the courage of a man, and display in society at home all the graces of a woman.

Things were in this condition when Major Montrose was promoted to a colonelcy. He was a distinguished officer, and had a good pension, but he had received orders to bring home detachments of invalids and time-expired men to England, so that he was obliged to come home in a troop ship, in which, at that time, he was not able to take his daughter. The separation had been very painful, but he had confided her and his faithful servant, who loved her dearly, to the care of his friend, Captain Greenfield, in a well appointed ship, and he hoped by these means to relieve the tedium of her voyage home.

Jenny was scarcely seventeen when she took her passage on board the *Dorcas*. She started two days before her father. For some time everything went well, but a terrible storm arose, and their pursuit by a French frigate obliged the *Dorcas* to seek shelter in the harbour of Batavia. From thence the ship had been sent on a mission to the island of Timorlaont, but had again the misfortune to be caught in a tempest and driven on those unknown reefs. The crew had, it is true, sufficient time to lower the boats, and Miss Jenny, as active as a cabin boy, had jumped into the smallest; but before they had rowed very far an enormous wave swamped the boat, and she was saved almost by a miracle. When she came to herself she was lying on the reef upon which the wave had dashed her.

She could give no account whatever of the fate of Captain Greenfield and his numerous crew in the larger boat. Amidst the horrors of the shipwreck she had not even noticed that there was any other boat except that in which she had jumped. She only remembered that her faithful attendant had disappeared in a manner as inexplicable as it was distressing. The poor girl remained upon the solitary rock, and during the first few days she was fortunately too exhausted in body and too troubled in mind to realize the full extent of her misery. She managed to drag herself towards a deep grotto, carpeted with fine sand, and there she had slept for eight and forty hours, or passed a portion of the time

in saddened reveries, without any food except some birds' eggs which she had found in the rock.

On the third day the pleasant rays of the sun aroused her to a sense of existence, but also to the conviction of her terrible condition. The weather was so fine that she was in hopes that the large boat, which no doubt was safe, would take advantage of the calmness of the sea, and come to seek its consort or the crew which might have been cast ashore.



In this consoling hope the shipwrecked woman had nothing to do but to light a fire. Some sailors' clothes having been cast ashore, she found some very necessary articles in the pockets. She kept up her fire for a long time with drift-wood and dried sea-weed, so as to save her matches and this fire she hoped would be a signal to any passing ship. A

sailor's trunk having been afterwards cast ashore, she was enabled to secure a supply of clothing, and, besides, she recovered some means of sustenance, such as a barrel of beer, and the cask of salted pork which Fritz had mentioned. But her fertile imagination furnished her with the means of undertaking and executing everything she wanted to render her solitude supportable. Her head and hands were always occupied in devising and making useful articles, and these occupations became a great pleasure to her. During the journeys, the hunting and fishing excursions, upon which she had accompanied her father, she had learnt a number of things which familiarized her with danger and disappointment. But she sustained herself above all with the firm conviction that as God had saved her so miraculously she would not be left to perish, and she preserved her health and strength by continuing to occupy herself usefully.

She had at first neglected to record the time, because after she had been cast ashore she had been in daily hope of being saved. She knew no more than the date of her shipwreck, but she was convinced that she had lived for two years and a half in solitude, for that she could prove by the marks she had made on the walls of her grotto, to reckon the days, weeks, and months. The want of writing materials was a sad deprivation to her, but, womanlike, she had treasured the past in her memory.

The unfortunate girl had all this time never doubted but that God would release her from her exile, because (and this was a very curious motive for her consolation) all the "Robinsons" of whom she had ever read had invariably returned happily to their native countries, or people had arrived to live with them, and why should not God be as merciful to her. She set about taming and educating some birds, but an accident almost always deprived her of them, and they never returned,—even the albatross which Fritz had wounded, and sent with his reply, did not come back.

"Oh," said Jenny, "I should have become too proud if the bird had come back with your answer. I was sometimes tempted to believe that I was alone in the universe, and that it all was only for my use and to make amends for my trouble. This was perhaps a feeling permitted by Providence, who was unwilling that I should give way to despair. You see everything is for the best, the hand of Heaven has placed me amongst people who have experienced its greatest mercies, and who have received me with kindness, and who think a great deal more of me than I deserve."

"Oh, yes," she added in conclusion, "I trust I may be still more useful to you than I ever thought I could be to myself, when I fancied I was alone in the world."

Such was in short the recital of our young friend, the concluding sentences of which bore testimony to the great candour, and at the same time to a certain misgiving respecting the future on the part of the heroine.

"My daughter," I said, "it is always a good thing to endeavour to find out if Heaven has ordained what we wish to arrive at ourselves. But it is easy to make a mistake, and to believe that Providence works according to our wishes, while His own are alone good and perfect. Do not fret any longer because you erred in thinking that you were of such great importance in His sight. Very wise men, and very clever men, have also believed themselves of great value, when they were merely instruments in His hands. But do not you fall into the same error, my child. Providence has not saved you any more for us, than He has saved us for you. Perhaps it may be His will that our sojourn on these coasts may be eventually for the benefit of a great number of shipwrecked people. How many countries have been originally prepared by individuals to be the blessed dwelling-place of a whole nation. It would be a great blessing if we are permitted to offer here a thank-offering of peace and good-will to other people who may arrive on these shores. Let us not spare any effort to render this country habitable, fertile, and thoroughly enjoyable for all its future possessors.

"Such active assistance as you render, my child, is a great blessing for us, and for the future there will exist among us the emulation that has been wanting for ten years, and of which you have been deprived for a long period. This has been arranged for some wise purpose. You know that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the knowledge of our heavenly Father."

"For my part," said my wife, "I am delighted that you have come, dear Jenny. I am so often alone and troubled with a thousand little cares and worries which my sons can neither share nor sympathize with; frequently suffering, and often ill, I consider myself most fortunate in having your assistance, my dear daughter. Now I have no longer so much fear of illness. I know that I shall be worthily replaced in my daily work, and zealously looked after by my adopted child."

"Oh yes, indeed," replied Jenny, as she warmly pressed my wife's hand.

"As for me," said Ernest, "I begin to be afraid of such a clever active sister as this. I must put my science on one side and fight against my idle habits."

Jack said that he was delighted to perceive that he would have a little more fun than before, for his brothers were getting very steady old fellows, and to be always joking by oneself was rather monotonous.

"For my part," said Frank at length, "I should like a little more

experience before giving an opinion upon my new sister. She will perhaps teach me what I require to know, and then I shall also profit by her presence."

"Oh," said Jenny, "what will be the result of your society upon me

if my poor company does so much for you? I should receive lessons, take example, and benefit by the counsel and assistance of six people;

the difference is really very great. But I wish to divide my favours, and the first year shall be entirely devoted to my dear mother.

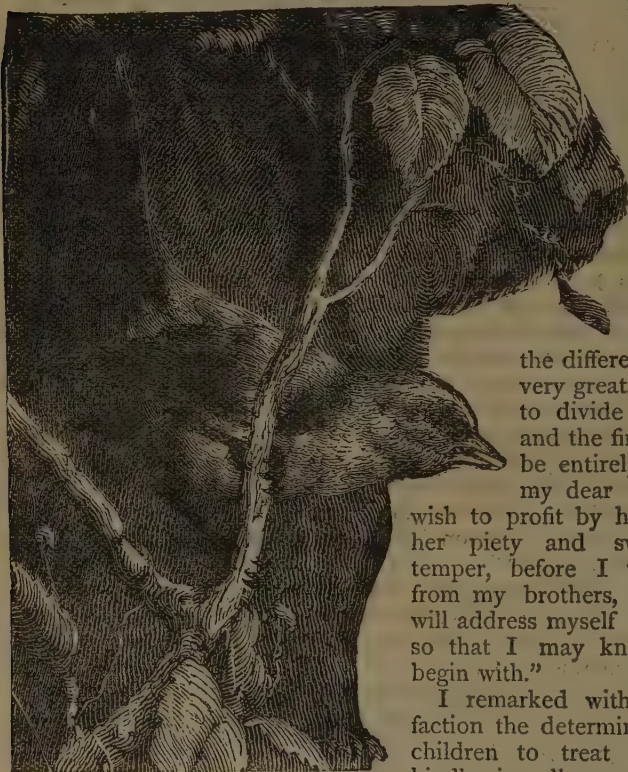
I wish to profit by her goodness, her piety and sweetness of temper, before I take lessons from my brothers, and then I will address myself to my papa, so that I may know who to begin with."

I remarked with great satisfaction the determination of the children to treat the stranger kindly in all respects. They

could not have given me a greater proof of their good nature, and I took advantage of the occasion to impress upon them the sacred duties of hospitality.

All this time Miss Jenny was very anxious to see our rocky residence, our home in the tree, and our other possessions, of which the boys had spoken so enthusiastically.

During our return journey, which was accomplished rapidly and without any adventure, the young people did not cease to point out



places, and afford information respecting them. We arrived in good time in the afternoon at Prospect Hill, where I resolved to rest that night. But I despatched Fritz and Frank in the canoe to Felsenheim to prepare everything for our reception. They carried out my orders intelligently, and on our arrival we found everything in perfect order, and I complimented them upon their earnestness and despatch.

Jenny was delighted with the appearance of the wooded country, which contrasted so strongly with the barren rock. She also expressed quite a childish joy at seeing our domestic animals, the fowls, goats, and sheep, and she ran laughingly amongst them, caressing them as a little girl might play with dolls she had given her as a Christmas box.

I was very glad to conduct Miss Jenny to the farms at Waldegg and at Falcon's Nest, and to introduce her to these charming places; and next morning I gave the signal to

embark for Whale Island, where the rabbits excited her enthusiasm to a high pitch. I was glad to perceive these evidences of the love of



animals, which appeared to extend itself to all living creatures, and begged her to consider the rabbits her own property, in the hope that she would soon have the time and wish to make something for herself from their long and silky fur.

It may be well imagined that our advanced guard did not neglect the opportunity to welcome us to Safety Bay. They received us with a salute of twelve guns, but Ernest was dissatisfied that they had not fired thirteen, for that was the correct number under the circumstances, according to his books of travel. He expressed a wish to reply from the yacht; and when I consented, he fired eleven guns very well with Jack's assistance. Just as we were passing Shark Island, to our great surprise, we saw Fritz descending along the cable which was fastened to the rocks, and Miss Jenny uttered a cry of terror. But Fritz in an instant was safe in his canoe, and rowing after us announced himself as the officer of the port, and bade us welcome in the name of the garrison of Felsenheim; that the arrival of our ship had been notified on the previous day, and that he would do us the honour of joining us again, so soon as he had terminated his business in the citadel.

The appearance of the young man, who played this part remarkably well, gave us great pleasure, which was not diminished by the way Fritz returned to the island to seek for Frank. We had all landed, when he joined us again; but when we found ourselves once more at home under the leafy shade, and welcomed by the songs of birds, our dear Jenny was profoundly touched, and tears of joy sprang to her eloquent eyes. We ourselves felt doubly rich, and experienced the happiness of the feeling, that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

In the gallery surrounding our aerial habitation we found a table all ready laid, and supplied with all our wealth of European and our native equipage. Porcelain from Felsenheim, bamboo utensils, cocoa nuts, cups made out of ostrich eggs; plates, glasses, and water bottles saved from the wreck; and the odd appearance of the whole thing was still further increased by the presence of the birds from our museum, which had been placed upon the table. A large garland of flowers was suspended above the table, and on a medallion was written in red letters, "Long live Miss Jenny Montrose! May her sojourn in our Crusoe hermitage be a happy one!"

But you must not think that all these cups and dishes were empty. They were filled with everything that could be procured in such a short space of time: hydromel, canary wine, and new milk; fruits of all kinds were arranged in pyramids upon fig leaves; two beautiful dishes of fish and roast meat completed the banquet, and I said to Frank, smiling, that it seemed as if a magician had been at work. He only rubbed his eyes in reply, and then I guessed that these two young fellows had passed the night in preparing this agreeable surprise for us.

Miss Jenny occupied the place of honour between my wife and myself, and Jack and Ernest also seated themselves, but Fritz and Frank determined to wait upon us in proper manner, and they acquitted them-



selves so well that we often stopped eating to look at them, but we always took care to keep up the important appearance of people who are accustomed to be waited on.

After dinner I am afraid Miss Jenny must have felt a good deal

fatigued, for she was appealed to on all sides to go to one place, to look at something in another, to mount or to descend, and she had as much as she could do to comply with these reiterated invitations. It needed all her vivacity and tact to express proper admiration for everything she saw. There was not a corner of the house or grotto, or yard or garden, which she was not shown in detail, with the exception of the kitchen, the most important of all our departments. Miss Jenny laughed at the boys, and ran away to my wife, so that she might be introduced to the scene of her future operations. My wife complied with her requests most gladly, and led the way towards the kitchen, but forbade the boys to accompany her. Jack consoled himself by making faces and seeking occupation elsewhere.

Next morning we were up very early to make an excursion to Falcon's Nest, and I judged it prudent to go there altogether, so as to examine our habitation and make the necessary repairs. As all our beasts of burden and draught, with the exception of the ostrich, were at Falcon's Nest, where we had put them out to grass, we were all obliged to go on foot but Jack, who rode his long-necked steed as usual, and amused us very much. The bird finished by "taking the bit between his teeth," and disappeared entirely; but not long afterwards Jack returned, driving a troop of these animals before him, and offered us all mounts. Miss Jenny refused, but Fritz accepted with pleasure, for he felt a little jealous that Jack should be riding while he was obliged to walk.

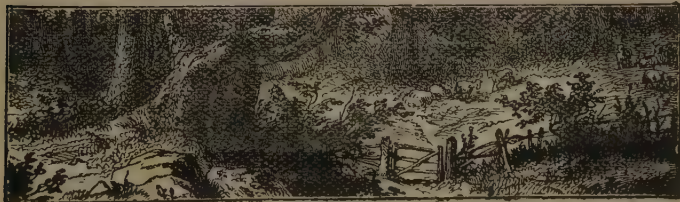
I did not find things in a very satisfactory state, and we spent a whole week in putting them in order, and that was not sufficient. Notwithstanding the amount of work, the time passed merrily away, for we were all in good spirits. We undertook each work with determination; the boys were very strong, and our leisure moments were lightened by Miss Jenny's narratives. The new elements of emulation and encouragement were beneficial to all. My wife was delighted to put before us from time to time some new dish which she had made with the assistance of her young friend. Fritz displayed more delicacy and complacency as well as more perseverance in his work. Ernest was learning many things from Jenny; Jack's practical jokes were conceived and executed in better taste, for he could not bear to think that Miss Jenny was indifferent to them, which always happened if they had no point. Jack's ability was excited by his new sister, who always seemed to seize the useful side of everything. Her sweet manners, her gaiety and unconsciousness, were most pleasing to me; she was always ready to undertake any work, and I found myself, with her assistance, extending my observations of nature in general, and in the characters of my sons.

The sojourn at Falcon's Nest was followed by an excursion to Wald-

egg, for the rice harvest. We went like a regular caravan,—beasts and birds, monkeys and dogs, carts and panniers, riders and carriages,—and we recalled our former journeys. We found it very pleasant to look back over the past, so rich in memories, and to make plans for the future. We were also able to recall our past life in Europe, but we were separated from it by a great gulf, and preferred not to think of it, at least not to regret it, so that we should not dwell too much on the thoughts of return. At that time I experienced great pleasure in looking back over the last ten years, and I recalled all my enjoyments as well as my sufferings and sorrows, as exclamations of joy or astonishment, or questions from Miss Jenny, made me often appreciate what I had forgotten or thought unworthy of notice.

The rainy season was approaching, and we were occupied in field labour; we also collected materials for employment during the winter. We made, amongst other things, an attempt which promised, thanks to Miss Jenny's assistance, to prove very agreeable as well as a source of profit. She was very skilful in plaiting reeds, and straw and grass, and of which she had made many things, such as curtains, carpets, and coverlets, while she was on the Smoking Rock; a branch of industry such as this I thought we should do wrong to neglect. The climate made straw hats very desirable; mats of straw would economize our canvas; light and elegant baskets would be extremely useful as well as ornamental, and we even talked of straw game-bags. I was directed to prepare colours to embellish these various articles.

As a matter of fact our young people did not so much dread the approach of the rainy season this year; they were even anxious for its arrival, so that they might set about these various occupations, one of their plans being the study of English. Our pronunciation of this language, particularly, was faulty for want of practice, and we were in hopes that a course of reading under Miss Jenny's direction would be of very great use to us.





CHAPTER LVIII.

A. Visit to Shark Island.—Firing the Cannon.—A Reply!—The *Unicorn*.—The Vessel Anchors.—The English Captain and Crew.—A Parting Approaches.—Mr. and Mrs. Woolston and Family.—The Pilot comes Ashore.—Departure of Fritz and Frank.—Farewell!



It is with very mingled feelings that I sit down to write this chapter.

God is good, God is great, are the words that come most readily into my mind, as for the last time I sit down to continue my narrative. Yes; the Omnipotent orders all things well. Every hope of my family has been realized. In the tumult of my thoughts, full of joy and of new hopes. I feel scarcely in condition to finish this history. I trust that the reader will pardon the apparent incoherence of a narrative brought to a conclusion among such a variety of cares. I am even somewhat troubled to bring my story to a suitable termination.

It was then towards the end of the rainy season, the sky had cleared more quickly than usual, and nature was once more appearing in all its beauty. We had passed the winter more gaily than ever, for Miss Jenny's society had been invaluable, and the hours passed with winged feet.

We thought that the rains had entirely ceased, and we went forth like pigeons from their cots. Delighted to find ourselves once more in the open air we extended our wearied limbs, as we studied the blue sky, or walked about our garden or plantations, or wherever fancy led us, to see what repairs had become necessary. Fritz made up his mind to go to Shark Island and to see whether the sea had cast up anything worthy our attention.

I consented, and Jack accompanied his brother. They soon reached the island and climbed the rock with their usual agility. They carefully swept the sea, and examined the coast on all sides, and many an upturn

tree and inundated valley met their gaze, but no trace of whale or shark could they see. They then went up towards the signal station where the cannon had been placed as much as possible under shelter.

I had told them to fire two shots to assure themselves of the condition of the cannon, as well as to serve as a signal, in case any ship should be in the neighbourhood. I had often told them to do the same thing in the hope that we might be discovered, or that we might be of some assistance to any shipwrecked crew, so that if they heard the guns they might respond to them.

My sons did not wait very long before they fired the cannon, for it was a bit of fun for them. But what was their astonishment when, after



about three minutes, they heard towards the west three shots in reply, which although very distant they could not mistake. With mingled feelings of joy, doubt and hope, they clasped hands, and Fritz said in a choking voice, "Men, men, please goodness they be friendly."

"But what shall we do," said Jack, who was quite surprised out of his ordinary coolness, for the novelty of the situation had so overcome him that he fairly shook with excitement.

"Let us hurry home and tell them," said Fritz, "so that we can put to sea in the canoe at once."

They accordingly hastened home without waiting to turn their vessel round, and drove it up on the sand stern on.

"What is it, what is it," I cried, in consternation, for I perceived that something extraordinary had happened.

"Oh, papa, have you not heard anything?" they said, running up to me and seizing me by the arm, "haven't you heard anything at all?"

I had heard nothing really, and their question appeared to me rather absurd. I confessed that I might have heard without noticing the echoes of their shots, but this doubt was not well received.

"We have fired more than fifty times before, and we know how to distinguish an echo from another gun, besides the third shot-sound came too late for an echo, and it is very curious that an echo should reply three times to two shots."

I did not know what to think of it, and I was more surprised than I thought possible, since I had always been very careful to make signals of distress, but I had not reflected what my conduct might be if any one really did come to these shores, so I was very unsettled and a prey to misgiving. Could these be Europeans? were they Malay pirates who had perhaps landed in the neighbourhood? could they be the crew of a vessel blown out of their course, or a ship on a voyage of discovery? Would it be well that we should betray our existence, or should we first observe their movements? I assembled the whole party together to a consultation, for the affair was of too great importance to decide merely in the presence of Fritz and Jack.

Before we had come to a conclusion, night fell, and we resolved to postpone our decision till to-morrow, and I desired my three eldest sons to sit up with me, and keep watch for any further signals. The night was not so calm as we had hoped; the wind got up again, the rain fell in torrents, and at length nothing could be heard but the roaring of the wind and sea. For two days and nights this tempest continued, and gave us so much trouble that we had no time to listen or look out for signals.

It was not until the third day that we were enabled to go out, although the sea was then rough and the sky very cloudy. It may well be imagined that we did not delay to go to our post of observation. I took Jack with me, and carried a flag, so that we might signal good or bad news to those at home. If I waved it three times in the air, and then lowered it, the whole family were to return at once to Falcon's Nest with the cattle, and await our arrival. If I only raised it twice, and planted the flag near the observatory, and if I also let the flag on the staff fly, they were to understand that appearances were favourable, or at least there was doubt.

My family observed our movements very closely, as with some emotion we started for Shark Island, and hurriedly scaled the rock. But although we looked carefully in every direction we could see nothing.

At length, following Jack's suggestion, I determined to fire three shots, to ascertain if any response would come, as I was rather doubtful about it. I thought that perhaps the boys had been deceived, or that the sound they had heard had been but the precursor of an earthquake. I loaded the pieces, Jack discharged them, and after each shot we paused for some minutes so as to have time to reload. We listened most attentively and heard a shot. After a pause of two minutes we heard another, and then a third, and at length seven shots one after the other. I uttered loud cries of joy. Jack capered about like a lunatic. I quickly hoisted the large flag, and began to wave the one I carried in my hand. But all at once, as if waking from a dream, I struck my forehead and cried out, "What a fool I am. I have given the signal 'all right,' and I do not know whether it is a friend or an enemy."

I reloaded the cannons, and told Jack to wait for a short hour and keep watch, and to fire a gun as soon as he perceived a boat or any stranger. Meantime I hastened back to Felsenheim to make necessary arrangements, and there I found every one on the *qui vive*. Fritz jumped into the boat before I touched the land, and every one cried out, "Where are they? what ship is it? Are they Europeans? Are they English?" They had not heard the seven shots, probably on account of the intervening rocks, but they had seen my signal, and they were wild with impatience. However I told the truth. I could not satisfy their curiosity, but they were quite content when I announced to them my intention to go in search of the vessel I presumed was so near, accompanied by Fritz. Jenny, usually so self-possessed, appeared quite to have lost her head. She ran about, singing snatches of twenty different songs, and declaring that her dear father had come to rescue her under the special guidance of Providence.

I took advantage of Fritz's ingenious idea and disguised myself as much as possible in a costume of skins and feathers. "If they think we are savages," I said, "they will not take so much notice of us, and will not come in search of our resting-place." Besides the signs which we shall make, our apparent timidity and our disappearance at once if we see there is nothing to hope from them, will make them believe that we do not dare to be confidential with strangers, and we should attract less attention than if they recognised us as Europeans. By acting in this manner we should have time to make further preparations if necessary, and in any case I recommend you all to return to Falcon's Nest, whither Jack and Frank will take the cattle, and mind, I added, that you arm yourselves well, for we shall be able to resist pirates with success, provided they are not too numerous.

It was about midday when Fritz and I set out in the kaiak. My wife watched us depart with great emotion, and appeared to be praying

silently on our behalf. Jack and Frank soon set out with cattle and some of the most valuable of our possessions. But Ernest and Jenny amused themselves quizzing our appearance, which was in fact the more absurd, as we had dyed our faces and hands. We had determined to play our part well, and made up our minds that in case of being discovered or taken prisoners, we were to speak with much dignity a horrible German-Swiss patois, which no sailor would ever comprehend. We were well armed, only we concealed our weapons, so that we should not use them except in the last extremity, and we made believe only to carry harpoons as offensive weapons.

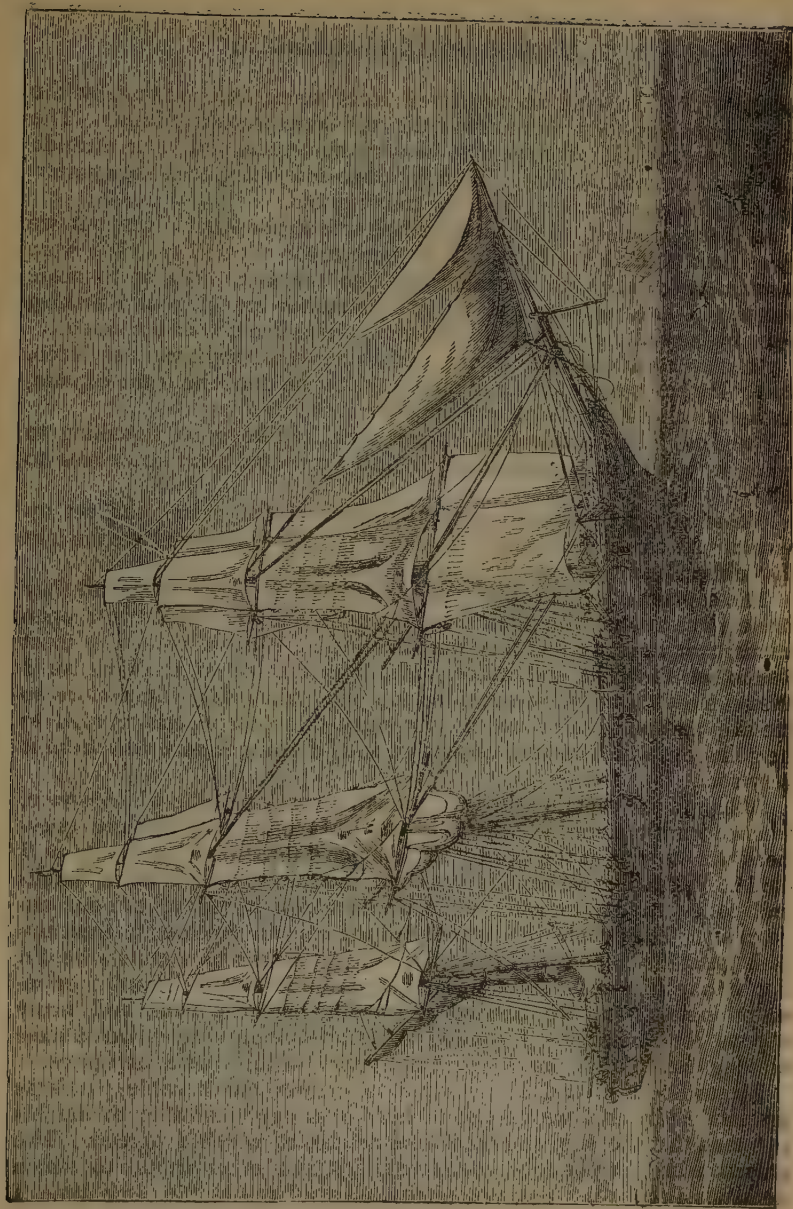
We rowed silently, and with every precaution, through Safety Bay, and then steered to the left towards the rocky promontory which runs out to sea near the Duck's Marsh. We had called this Duck Promontory, but we had never been the other side of it to the west of Felsenheim, for the sea was studded with reefs and rough rocks, and we had never cared to venture thither. I now very much regretted that I had not acquainted myself with the district, as this ignorance on my part would prevent us finding a suitable spot to land on in case of pursuit.

However we sailed without incident for about an hour and a half, and we could have accomplished the passage in a straight line in twenty-five minutes, if the size of our boat had not obliged us to keep close to land. But the direction we took brought us at length opposite another promontory larger than Duck Point, which we found we must double, for according to all appearance the ship we sought must be anchored the other side of it, as we could scarcely hear the shots she had fired.

At length we doubled the cape with some little difficulty, and at first could only see some rocks. But what was our delight after a few seconds to behold a European ship lying in a small bay just under the wooded shore, and flying an English flag. She certainly had not been abandoned, for as we gazed we perceived a boat leave her side and pull to land.

It was as much as I could do to prevent Fritz from jumping into the sea, though I was so disposed myself. Fortunately, however, I checked myself in time by the reflection that we should gain nothing if we did not make certain that this was a European vessel, for they might be Asiatic pirates, who had hoisted the English flag as a ruse or in derision. It was also possible that it might be an English ship whose crew had mutinied and killed their officers, as sometimes happened, and had brought the ship to these unknown seas for safety.

We remained therefore hidden behind a large rock, upon which we crept high enough to examine the ship at our ease by means of our telescopes. She appeared to me to be a ten-gun brig. Her sails were furled, her yards were struck, she was at anchor and appeared to be under-



THE SHIP WAS AT ANCHOR.

going repair. On land we perceived three tents, and judging by the savoury smell wafted to our nostrils, the crew were preparing dinner. The ship's company did not appear to be very numerous, and their attitude was by no means menacing. However, two sentinels paced the quarter-deck, the ports were open, and the guns run out.

At length we decided that it would be safe to show ourselves, but we agreed not to leave the boat nor to betray our nationality. We were much amused when, as we came out into the bay, Fritz and I made gestures of astonishment and terror, sometimes stopping and making signs to the sentinels, who immediately gave notice of our approach.

An officer made his appearance, and Fritz, whose sight was very keen, said, "He has the white face of an European; no doubt he is the captain, for he has all the appearance of superior authority."

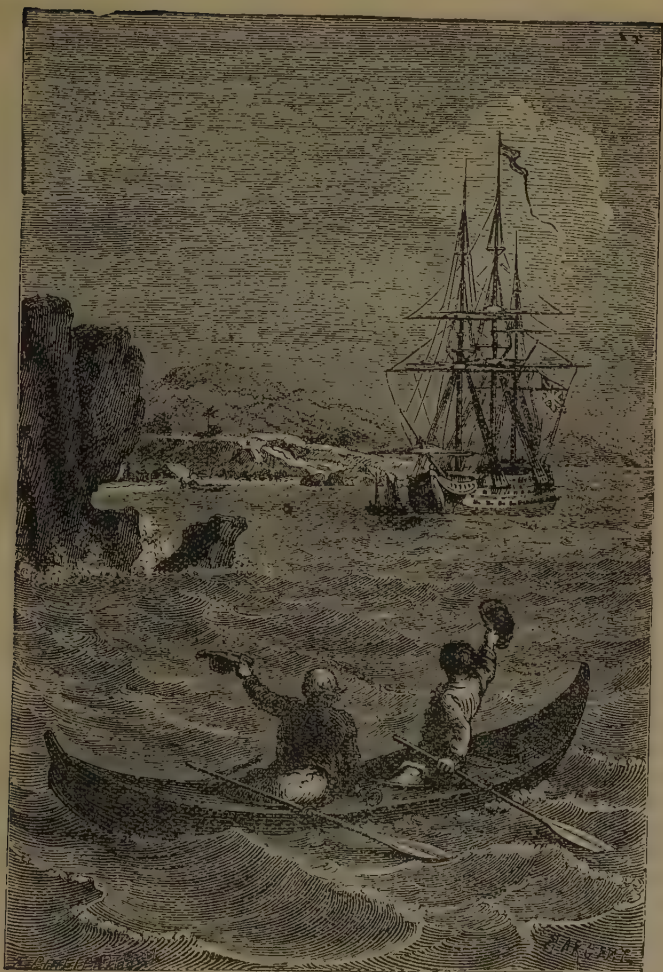
I replied, "Let us sing a little Swiss song, and keep on signalling to them, we shall then extract some English words and shall know how to act."

We advanced then within a stone's throw of the vessel, and set up such an extremely melancholy ditty that no one would ever have thought that either the air or the words were European.

The captain and some other people were now distinctly seen, and they made signs to us with their handkerchiefs, and displayed their open hands, as if to prove that they were unarmed. What re-assured us most was to see the boat still ashore instead of coming to meet us, for I should most certainly have avoided it. We immediately came close to the ship and pulled all round it. In every direction repairs seemed to be going on, which assured us that we should not receive a visit from it very soon.

At length the captain asked us through a speaking tube who we were, whence we came, and what land it was. My only reply to these questions was to repeat the word "Englishmen" three times as loudly as I could. Meantime we kept approaching the ship to take in all its details and to endeavour to catch some words which would relieve our uncertainty. The people who surrounded the captain appeared to treat him with great deference, and if he were the ringleader of a mutiny he did not betray himself. There was no appearance of any disorder or insubordination, and we noticed red cloth, hatchets, nails, and many objects for exchange. I showed the harpoons and pretended to have nothing else to offer, for I would not part with the arms at any price.

Meanwhile Fritz and I continued to chatter our horrible patois as unconcerned as if we were at home. Fritz communicated to me his opinions that the ship and crew were honest, to which I agreed. The officers asked for potatoes, cocoa-nuts, figs, and other fruits, to which demands I replied, "Yes, yes, plenty, plenty," and at the same time I



gave Fritz, who was laughing behind his hand, to understand that we must be ready to retreat promptly, in order to consult about our ultimate plans.

In consequence, we pretended to take farewell of the English, and to get out of the bay as quickly as possible to gain our secret passage ; we

were then enabled to relieve our pent-up feelings, not only at delight at the farce we had played, but also at the joy which we experienced in encountering human beings once again, and in seeing a prospect of a new life, and communication with the world, opening before us.

We rowed home as fast as possible, and when we reached Safety Bay we discharged our fire-arms as a joyful signal, which was responded by those at home, and who then came hurriedly down to receive our report.

Miss Jenny was the only one not delighted with our recital; for with the laudable conviction that her father had come to her rescue, she reproached us for having kept up the joke, and maintained that if we had announced her presence in the island, all would have gone well. My wife, on the contrary, commended our prudence, and observed that the imposing appearance we should all make together would be much more in our favour than only two of us arriving in a canoe. She was therefore of opinion that we should all go in the large boat to meet the strangers, and carry with us some presents befitting our situation.

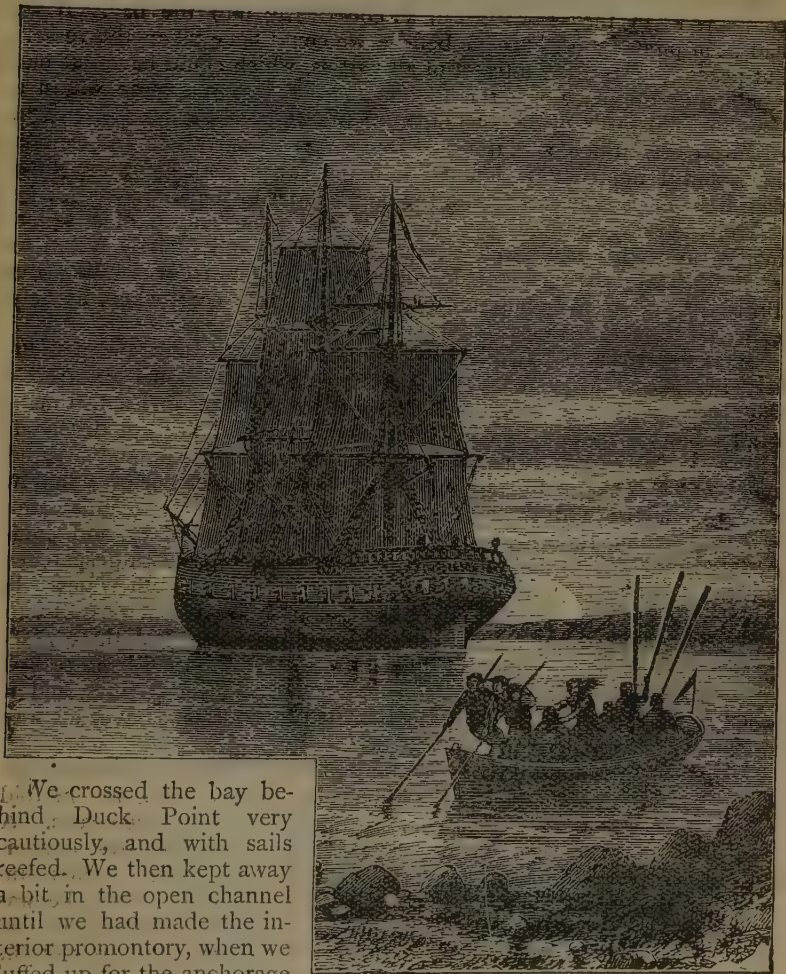
This proposition was received with general approval, and it was equally agreed that we should say nothing of our preceding reconnaissance, nor should we betray the position of our residences. It seems impossible for me to describe the joy which possessed us all that evening. The most absurd plans were conceived and rejected at the same instant; one wished this, another hoped that, some desired one thing, some another, and each one appeared to think that all of us, young and old, birds and beasts, were to sail for Europe immediately.

At the same time my wife regarded me with an anxious look, and appeared very desirous to know my opinion upon all these projects.

In my position as father of the family, a founder of the settlement, it was very difficult for me to decide. I retired to my room and prayed fervently for the Divine assistance. At length I perceived how foolish I was to trouble myself before I had visited the strange vessel, and, above all things, till I had ascertained whether we all wished to depart, and whether the ship could take us away if we did desire to leave our island, in which we had lived so long and so happily. The whole day was occupied in getting our boat ready, in putting our arms and clothes in order, and in making up a present of fruits and vegetables for the crew of the ship, who had expressed a great desire for fresh fruits.

The morning of the following day was also employed in preparations, and we did not set out until after our midday meal. Fritz, this time wearing full uniform of a naval officer, took his position as pilot, and preceded us in his kaiak. In our boat we were all habited as sailors, lightly armed. Our boat carried baggage, as well as arms and refresh-

ments. We started confidently on this expedition, which was to determine our future, and to decide whether we should have the happiness to return to the world, or see our hopes disappointed.



We crossed the bay behind Duck Point very cautiously, and with sails reefed. We then kept away a bit in the open channel until we had made the interior promontory, when we luffed up for the anchorage of the brig. As we approached, Fritz mounted on our deck, and I saw that my little crew gazed at the vessel with a mixture of hope

and fear. But that no time might be given to anxious thought, I cried out in the voice of a stentor to hoist the English flag, and I steered so as to run alongside the ship.

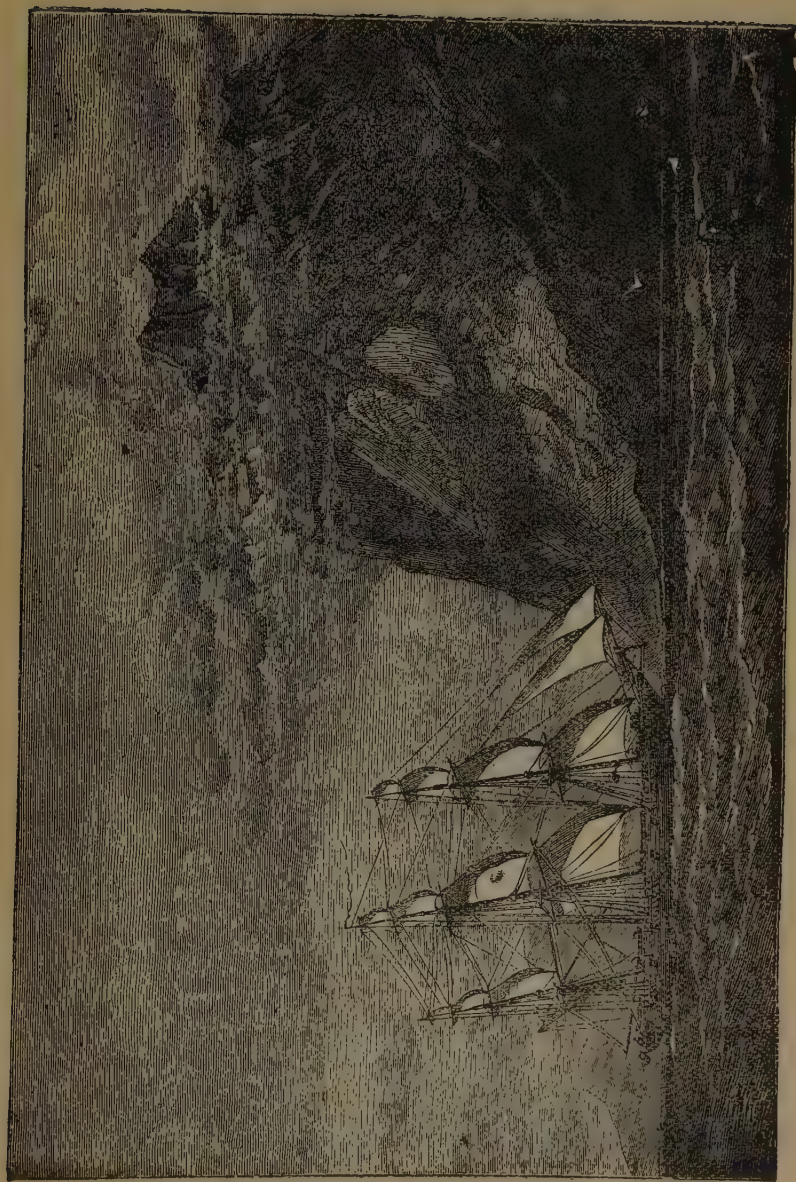
It would be impossible to describe the astonishment of the ship's company when they saw us sail so confidently into the bay. If we had been pirates in disguise, I believe we could have taken the vessel; but peace, joy, and the interest of all parties, which could have but one result, took the place of our mutual astonishment. We came within a few hundred yards of the anchorage of the ship, and saluted it with a ringing cheer, which was returned by the crew both afloat and ashore. Fritz and I immediately jumped into the canoe, and, flying the white flag, went to pay our respects to the commander of the ship.

He received us with all the cordiality and good nature of a sailor, invited us to his cabin, offered us some wine, and politely asked to what fortunate circumstance he owed the happiness of saluting the British flag on such an unknown and inhospitable coast where he only expected to meet savages.

In as few words as possible I told him our circumstances, and particularly mentioned Miss Jenny, for I considered that Colonel Montrose's daughter would have more interest for the captain of an English man-of-war than an unknown Swiss family could have. I was not deceived. He made many close inquiries respecting the young lady, and assured me, that when last in England, he had met the commander of a ship in which Colonel Montrose had come to England. My informant's name was Littlestone, he was first lieutenant in the royal navy, and commanded the *Unicorn* corvette. He had been entrusted with despatches for the Cape of Good Hope, and for Sydney, New South Wales. It had happened by chance that he had been requested, if possible, to explore the coast upon which the *Dorcas* had been lost three years before. Three sailors and the boatswain of that ship had been picked up at Sydney, where they had arrived after incredible sufferings, and it was in consequence of their information that he had come out of his way to explore the scene of the shipwreck.

Captain Littlestone expressed himself very happy at having encountered Miss Jenny, one of the objects of his expedition, and he told us that he was on the point of abandoning these savage coasts. A storm, which had raged for four days, had placed him in great danger, and had driven him on our shore, where there was no port to offer him a refuge, though he found safe anchorage in the bay. While he was taking in wood and water he had heard our cannon shots, and had replied with three others, never doubting that it was the crew of the *Dorcas* who had been saved and taken refuge here.

He then made every preparation to assist them, but the second storm



THE CORVETTE.

coming on blew him out of the bay, and it was with great difficulty that its boat's crew, which was ashore, gained the ship. The last three cannon shots had been heard and replied to, and he proposed to examine the coast farther in search of the supposed crew. But a great many of the sailors were ill, and amongst the invalids was a certain very clever engineer, Mr. Woolston, who, with his wife and two daughters, had come as passengers on board the *Unicorn*, and who was now so ill they did not think he could continue his voyage.

This intelligence had been given me very briefly, and I now invited the captain, with all due respect, to come on board my boat and visit my family, which he promised politely to do, asking if he might be permitted to announce himself to the ladies. We were much flattered by this proposition, and Fritz and I returned to our yacht. We



found our people somewhat anxious, but they were now reassured, and made every preparation to receive the captain in a manner befitting his rank. In about a quarter of an hour he appeared, bringing with him his boatswain, Master Willis, and Dunsley, a midshipman. We had prepared a luncheon for them on board, and very soon we were on a very intimate footing, so much so that it was decided that we should pass all night in the bay, visit the sick in their tents, and sleep on shore, where Captain Littlestone placed two new tents at our disposal.

My wife was very desirous to end her days on the island; but she desired to keep me with her as well as two of the boys. She wished the other two to go to Europe on condition that they would send out some people of good character who would come to us and found a colony, which we were to call New Switzerland.

I agreed with her entirely, and I undertook to speak to Captain Little-

stone, and to present to him our island as a voluntary offering to England, placing it under his protection; but we were very much embarrassed as to which of the boys we should send to Europe, for each of them had good points which fitted him for the duty. Our perplexity was only natural, for they were all equally dear to us, and it was as painful for us to part with one as the other, and we came to no decision upon the subject till we had consulted them.

We resolved at length to wait for a day or two, and to manage things so that two of the boys should remain voluntarily with us, but that the other two should go if the captain could take them. The next day the decision was made in the most natural manner possible. The captain, accompanied by his boatswain and midshipman, paid us a visit at Felsenheim, where the engineer and his family had already been brought, and upon whom our nursing had had a beneficial effect, thanks to the beautiful air. The expedition we subsequently took was a most enjoyable one for us all; but what was the surprise and delight of our new friends when on turning round Duck Point they perceived our beautiful bay, with Felsenheim beyond, lit up by a splendid sun, and showing every sign of fertility and order. Their surprise reached its height when the salute of eleven guns pealed forth from Shark Island, and the English flag floated majestically in the morning breeze.

"It would be a capital thing to live here," said the invalid, "and to establish ourselves on this island."

"You are very happy here!" said Mrs. Woolston.

"Oh, mamma, is not this the gate of Paradise?" demanded one of the daughters, naively.

"It is indeed," replied her mother, who was enchanted with everything she beheld.

The disembarkation was another scene of enthusiasm; there was a continual movement of men and animals; a thousand objects were pointed out and admired. The "pilot," as the boatswain was called, and myself, carried poor Woolston into my room, where my wife attended on him, and where we established a camp bed for Mrs. Woolston, so that she might devote herself to her husband.

Our dinner was not prolonged, for we proposed to visit Falcon's Nest, and we were all too much excited to eat. The scene was like a village fair. When words failed us we supplemented them by gestures, and it was sometimes with laughing, sometimes with a grave face, that we pointed out the various objects of interest. Each of my sons came out in a new character. Fritz was quieter, Ernest was more sprightly, Jack more reflective, and Frank less opinionated. Jack went off at full gallop on his ostrich for the purpose, he said, of making the Governor of Falcon's Nest aware of the arrival of his distinguished guests.

It was not till quite evening that calm was re-established in our little community. Mrs. Woolston expressed her husband's desire to remain on the island with his wife and eldest daughter, while the younger went on to the Cape to her brother's house, with whom she might come back some day if the engineer had no objection, when he would remain on the island for ever where everything was so pleasant.

I consented at once, and I spoke then of our great desire to remain also in New Switzerland. "Long live New Switzerland!" they all cried, and we drank the toast with enthusiasm. "Long may New Switzerland continue to flourish, and long life to those who wish to remain here!" exclaimed Ernest, to my great astonishment, as he clinked his glass against mine, his mother's, and Mr. Woolston's.

"Yes, my dear parents," continued he, "I have made up my mind to remain with you and to endeavour as much as possible to repay all the care you have lavished upon me."

"And what toast are you going to drink to those who are about to quit New Switzerland?" said Miss Jenny, mischievously. "I should very much like to remain, but nevertheless England has superior attractions for me."

Fritz immediately replied, "Long live the pastors, may they be rich, happy, and content!"

"Fritz will go," I said; "he is old enough to travel, and he has a taste that way. He may come back when his heart turns towards his parents, his first and best friends. His return will always be welcome in New Switzerland as a festival. Go then, my dear sons; you carry with you our blessings and our tears, and we know you will ever think of us in our happy exile. Ernest will remain and fill the appointment of Professor of Natural History in New Switzerland."

"But what is Jack going to do?"

"Jack is going to stay here," was the reply. "He will be the best rider, the best shot, and the best climber, when Fritz shall have gone. I have ambition and will remain. I do not wish to have anything to do with Europe. If I went there I should only be fit to go to school, from which Heaven protect me."

"Now it is just to a good school that I want to go," said Frank. "In good society one can always do more than amidst a company of Robinson Crusoes. It may perhaps be a good thing that one of our family should establish himself in the old country. I am the youngest, and it will be the easiest for me to contract new habits; however, I will do nothing without my father's advice."

"I think you have spoken very sensibly," I replied. "Go, my son, and may God bless you; we are all in His hands. I will take you at your words, my dear boys, and act as you desire; but it will be import-



ant to know whether Captain Littlestone can meet Miss Jenny's wishes and your own, and whether he can assist in the accomplishment of them.

Everybody was silent. Some faces expressed embarrassment, the others curiosity. The captain then said politely, "I consider this a manifestation of the will of Divine Providence. I had a mission to go in search of some shipwrecked people, and I have found some, but not those whom I had sought. I am about to leave three people behind me and to take three others in their places. My ship can take no more than these, for it is not sufficiently well provided with provisions, but I shall be very glad to do all in my power to meet your views. In a word, I am quite ready to take those whom the brave Swiss pastor may recommend, and I rejoice extremely that I am the humble means of establishing the communication between the world and his family. Once again, long live New Switzerland and its inhabitants!"

Every one present was more or less agitated, and one by one they retired, so as to be alone with their thoughts, for many amongst us felt that the next day would be a very important one, and that the new era in our lives would then commence. My own mind was relieved of a great weight, and I was very thankful that the difficulty I had anticipated had been so soon overcome.

And now, what more was to be done? Each one can imagine for himself how we passed the time which preceded such a lengthened separation. The captain himself was very anxious to set sail, as he had already been detained for some days, and he was by no means sure of the weather, and he did not wish to extend the time fixed for the delivery of his despatches. However he gave us as long as he possibly could, and he actually brought the corvette into Safety Bay, so that we might the more easily take our things on board. He also was considerate enough to keep his crew on board as much as possible, so that we might not be interfered with. He lent us the services of the pilot, the carpenter, and another. But we had little need of their assistance, for every one displayed the most remarkable activity, and made every effort to render the situation as little painful as possible. There was seen a generous rivalry in the matter of gifts which those who remained pressed upon those who were about to leave, and which might fairly have been divided.

So I decided the question. We requested Miss Jenny to carry all that she possessed from the Smoking Rock, and it was not without some tears that she re-visited the spot. I considered as far as I could the future necessities of Fritz and Frank; but the question of clothing I left to their mother, who took a pride in arranging their wardrobe which they were to take to Europe. I gave them their share of their goods,

pearl, coral, nutmegs, vanilla, curious objects of natural history, and of anything that appeared likely to fetch money. We also gave them a portion of the jewellery and merchandise, on account of which they might be able one day to bring us European products in exchange. Meantime I made an exchange with Captain Littlestone for some guns, and as much powder as he could spare. I made presents of all the articles useful to a sailor which we had recovered from the wreck. I also sent back some papers, and a casket of valuables belonging to the late captain of our vessel, for the use of his heirs, and I begged them to inform the relatives of our late companions, if any of them were alive. To this I added the details of our shipwreck, and a list of the crew, which I found in the cabin.

We supplied the *Unicorn* with all the provisions we could spare. We put on board some cattle, some salt meat, fish, vegetables, and fruit, or anything we thought useful to the crew. Joy is always generous. I wished to leave to my sons an impression which would preserve the affectionate memory of us in their hearts. I conversed with them frequently of my experience in the world, and of their duty to God; and I gave them, in writing, my advice and counsel, which I had long matured and suited to their different dispositions, and to the circumstances in which I believed they would most likely be placed. My great desire was to learn some day that they had preserved the good principles which I had instilled in their hearts, and that they had led Christian lives. Every hour, every minute, brought some new care, some new anxiety, and needed some new word of affection, some new advice to be addressed to my dearly loved sons. We were all very sad, and nevertheless confident of a happy future for them.

The last evening no one wished to appear melancholy, so we invited the captain and all the officers to a farewell supper. On this occasion, I produced the journal which I had written, and handed it solemnly to Fritz, calling the attention to it of prudent Frank, as well as the other people present, and begged them to have it printed in Europe, and cut down where it appeared too verbose.

"I hope," I said, "that this account of our life on these distant shores will not be without benefit to the world, when the youth of my country shall have read this simple and unpretending narrative. What I have written for the benefit of my sons, may also be useful to others, particularly to young people. Children resemble each other very much, and my four sons are types of other children all over the world. I shall congratulate myself if my narrative makes them attentive to the happy consequences of doing right, to the fortunate results springing from due thought, proper instruction, perseverance, and obedience in a family. I shall be very happy if in Europe, and above all, in my own country.

there should be somewhere or other a father and a mother who will sympathize with myself and my wife, and who will search my narrative for consolation or some useful information. I have not written it as a tutor. I have merely described what has happened here. All I have said is not, perhaps, conformable to theory. We have been in a peculiar position; but it appears to me that three things have resulted, and these three things might be employed in every similar case. Primarily, an entire confidence in Divine goodness; secondly, continual employment; thirdly, varied instruction, although obtained at hazard; but not putting to oneself the selfish question, 'What possible good can this do me?' Youth ought to be anxious to appropriate all that it can comprehend, with the exception of evil, and it ought to exercise always in every occupation the skill which is the very lever of human force.

"But it is late. To-morrow morning I shall put this chapter with those I have handed to my eldest son.

"May God be with us all. Without Him we are nothing. Farewell Europe, farewell dear Switzerland. May New Switzerland become as powerful and flourishing as my native land. May its inhabitants always be as happy, pious, and free."



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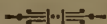
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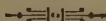
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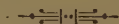
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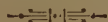
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